

Approaches to Academic Work

Critical Thinking

- Recognising that information is never value free or objective, but is shaped by power groups and interest groups
Critique of objectivity
- Not accepting information and beliefs at face value but identifying and then questioning the underlying assumptions
Critique of tradition

Critical Thinking

- Questioning that there is just one right view, recognising that there might be different but valid perspectives

Critique of authority

- Recognising that information is never neutral and that communication is often persuasion

Critique of rhetoric

From: Mingers, J. (2000) 'What Is it To Be Critical?' *Management Learning*, 31, 2, 219-237

Critical Questions

- Purpose?
- Problem?
- Assumptions?
- Point of view?
- Accuracy?
- Ideas and concepts?
- Interpretations, inferences, conclusions?
- Implications and consequences?

Elements of an Essay

- Structure
 - introduction, main body, conclusions
- Flow
 - making connections to produce a coherent piece of work
 - building points logically
 - style - avoid jargon and abbreviations
- Balance
 - between description and analysis
 - between different sides to an argument

Elements of an Essay

- Limit the scope of your work - aim for depth
- Summarise - very important at the end of each section
- Put nothing new in the conclusion

TOP TIP

For a conclusion

- Imagine your house is burning down, which of the points would you save?

TOP TIP

For analysis

- Ask yourself the 'which means that...' or the 'because..' question

Key Points for Assignments

- Pay attention to grammar and spelling
- One sentence does not make a paragraph
- Avoid using quotes as “Christmas tree decorations”
- Display critical thinking
- Answer the question - all parts of it

Key Points for Bibliographies

- Follow the School of Business Reference Guidance
- Ask your tutor if there are any parts you don't understand
- Remember that many markers look at your references first

Ask Yourself...

- Is my work clear?
- Is it accurate?
- Is it precise?
- Is it relevant?
- Is it deep or superficial?
- Is it broad or narrow?
- Is it logical?

TOP TIP

Before submission...

- Use spell check, a critical friend and/or a few days break