

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

ACADEMIC REPORT

Student Name: Marzena Beczek

Student Number: 2413128

Module Code: LCBB4012_LON

Module Title: Academic Skills

Assignment Title: The Importance of Critical Thinking for Academic Success

Lecturer: Sukhpreet Grewal

Date: 3 November 2025

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Definition of Critical Thinking	2
3. The Importance of Critical Thinking for Academic Success	2-3
4. Strategy to Develop Critical Thinking	3-4
5. Conclusion.....	4
6. References	5

1. Introduction

Critical thinking is one of the most important skills for university students because it helps them learn independently and make logical decisions. It allows students to question ideas, analyse arguments, and judge information carefully instead of accepting it without proof. In a world full of facts, opinions, and misinformation, critical thinking helps identify reliable sources and build fair conclusions. This report explains what critical thinking is, why it matters for academic success, and how the CRAAP test can help develop this skill.

2. Definition of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking can be defined as the ability to make reasoned judgements through analysis, evaluation, and reflection on evidence rather than accepting information at face value. Cottrell (2019) describes it as a process of questioning ideas and arguments to form independent conclusions. Similarly, Facione (2015) explains that critical thinking involves interpretation, inference, and self-regulation. In academic writing, this means students must evaluate sources, identify logical connections, and present balanced arguments. In essence, critical thinking requires curiosity, open-mindedness, and a willingness to challenge assumptions.

3. The Importance of Critical Thinking for Academic Success

Critical thinking plays a vital role in achieving success at university.

It helps students question ideas, analyse evidence, and make balanced decisions rather than accepting information without reflection.

In a study environment full of facts, opinions, and misinformation, this skill is essential for building strong, evidence-based arguments.

Firstly, critical thinking enables students to assess information carefully and choose reliable sources.

When learners evaluate the relevance and quality of materials, they make sure their essays and reports are based on credible evidence instead of weak or biased information (Burns & Sinfield, 2016).

Secondly, it improves academic writing and communication.

Students learn to organise ideas clearly, support claims with relevant data, and present balanced discussions.

Analytical tools such as the CRAAP test help identify reliable and relevant materials before using them in assignments.

Finally, critical thinking supports academic integrity and professional growth.

When students evaluate information critically, they paraphrase correctly, cite sources accurately, and avoid plagiarism (University of Leeds, 2020).

It also prepares them for the workplace, where people who can analyse situations and make sound decisions are highly valued.

4. Strategy to Develop Critical Thinking

One effective strategy for developing critical thinking is the CRAAP test. This method, developed by librarians at California State University, Chico (Meriam & Kraemer, 2009), helps students check if information is reliable, accurate, and suitable for academic work. It is especially useful when researching for assignments, as it teaches students to question the quality and purpose of every source.

The CRAAP test includes five main criteria: Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose.

Currency means checking if the information is up to date, which is important in fast-changing areas such as technology, business, or health.

Relevance looks at how well the source fits the topic. Sometimes a source may be interesting but not helpful for the main question, so it should be avoided.

Authority focuses on who wrote the text and whether the author or organisation is qualified and trustworthy.

Accuracy checks if the information is supported by facts or data from other credible sources.

Finally, Purpose helps identify why the text was written to inform, persuade, sell, or entertain.

Following these steps helps students recognise strong, trustworthy sources and avoid weak or biased information.

For example, while preparing my Assessment Brief report, I found many online articles about student motivation. After applying the CRAAP test, I realised that some were outdated or written by people without academic experience. I decided to use newer, peer-reviewed research and university reports instead. This improved the quality of my writing and helped me support my ideas with stronger, up-to-date evidence.

Overall, the CRAAP test is an effective strategy for developing critical thinking. It trains students to analyse information objectively, make informed decisions, and use credible sources in their assignments. Regularly practising CRAAP also supports academic integrity and builds confidence in independent learning.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, critical thinking is essential for academic success because it helps students evaluate information, build clear arguments, and work with honesty and accuracy. It supports every stage of learning, from researching and note-taking to writing and presenting. By applying structured methods such as the CRAAP test, students can enhance their reasoning skills and produce higher-quality academic work. Therefore, critical thinking is not only a requirement for university achievement but also a valuable skill for lifelong personal and professional growth.

References

Burns, T. and Sinfield, S. (2016) *Essential Study Skills*. 4th ed. London: SAGE.

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 5th ed. London: Red Globe Press.

Facione, P. A. (2015) *Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts*. California: Insight Assessment.

Merriam, J. and Kraemer, B. (2009) *The CRAAP Test*. California State University, Chico. Available at: https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

University of Leeds (2020) 'Critical Thinking'. University of Leeds Library. Available at: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1401/academic_skills/46/critical_thinking (Accessed: 3 November 2025).