

Writing a critical review

For this assessment students will be required to select an article or edited chapter that relates to their research theme (selected for this module) – if unsure, consult with the subject tutor. For this critical review, you should provide a coherent summation of the key points or arguments made in the article, highlighting the use of any relevant methodologies or theories, followed by a critical response to its overarching premise/conclusion. Discussions which bring in other pertinent scholarship, feeding into any of the points discussed, may garner further marks. Remember that while you may agree with the overall position, you may disagree with some of the specific arguments made; if this is the case, you should make this clear in your response, and also explain why you disagree. You should be careful to base your arguments with an understanding of other modern scholarly views and arguments on the subject and in particular how this helps you to engage with an interpret your choice of art object/image. There should be a brief bibliography, as you should embed your review in the wider literature.

- A summary of the article's key **content and themes** (*i.e. what is the article about?*)
- A discussion of the article's main **arguments** (*e.g. does it have a thesis statement?*)
- A brief discussion of who the **author** is and whether that is significant (*i.e. how does it relate to the rest of the author's scholarship?*)
- A discussion of the article's **theoretical and/or methodological approach** (*e.g. what makes the article an example of, say, gender studies?*)
- A discussion of the article's contribution to the scholarly debate, with reference to your own personal research topic (*i.e. which other scholars does the author mention and does the author agree/disagree with them? Which other scholars work in similar fields and how might the article relate to their work?*)
- A discussion of the types of **primary sources** used (*i.e. what types of archival materials did the author consult? Where do you think the author accessed the sources? How are the primary sources integrated into the article?*)
- An evaluation of the article's **writing style** (*i.e. how well-written is the article? Is it easy to follow? Does the prose flow? Are there any examples of technical jargon or difficult language that you struggled with?*)
- An evaluation of the article's main **strengths and weaknesses** (*e.g. how persuasive is it? Are there any gaps in the evidence? Can counterarguments be mounted against it?*)
- A summary of **your overall opinion** of the article (*i.e. what made it interesting [or not]? Are there any ways in which the article might present examples for you to emulate in your own writing and research?*)