

Writing a Critical Response

What is meant by 'critical'?

To be critical does not mean to criticise in an exclusively negative manner. To be critical of a text means that you question the information and opinions in the text, in an attempt to evaluate or judge its worth overall.

Reading the text: Points to consider

Read the article carefully.

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the author's purpose? To survey and summarise research on a topic? To present an argument that builds on past research? To refute another writer's argument?
- Does the author define important terms?
- Is the information in the text fact or opinion? Does the information seem well-researched or is it unsupported?
- What are the author's central arguments or conclusions? Are they clearly stated? Are they supported by evidence and analysis?
- Is the text lacking information that you expected to find?
- Is the text organised logically and easy to follow?
- Does the writer's style suit the intended audience?
- Is the author's language objective or charged with emotion and bias?

After you are familiar with the text, make notes on some of the following questions. Choose the questions that seem suitable:

- What kind of article is it (for example does it present data or does it present purely theoretical arguments)?
- What is the main area under discussion?
- What are the main findings?
- What are the stated limitations?
- Where does the author's data and evidence come from? Are they appropriate / sufficient?
- What are the main issues raised by the author?
- What questions are raised?
- How well are these questions addressed?
- What are the major points/interpretations made by the author in terms of the issues raised?
- Is the text balanced? Is it fair / biased?
- Are there contradictory points?
- **How does all this relate to other literature on this topic?**
- **How does all this relate to your own experience, ideas and views?**

Plan and write the first draft

The **first paragraph** may contain:

- the author's purpose in writing the article
- comments on how the article relates to other work on the same subject

The **body** of the response should:

- summarise the text to its main points and most important ideas;
- focus on points within the article that you think are interesting;
- state your arguments;
- include quotations from the article which illustrate your main ideas.

You might answer the following questions:

Is this viewpoint important in the context of the teaching and learning of Welsh? If so, why?

Is there relevant documentation / policy / curriculum in Wales that backs up your views?

The **concluding** paragraph may:

- summarise your response;
- Restate your overall opinion of the text;
- Briefly present recommendations.

References

Please use the referencing guide (available on Moodle) to construct your Reference List.

You should only reference texts used in the assignment. You *are not* required to include a bibliography (i.e. you do not need to list any texts read but not referred to).

Revise your work

Give yourself sufficient time to do a substantive revision that clarifies any confusing logic or arguments. As you revise your work, you should consider multiple aspects of your writing to make sure that your readers will be able to understand what you have written. Consider the following questions as you revise your work:

- What is your main point? How might you clarify your main point?

- Who is your audience? Have you considered their needs and expectations?
- What is your purpose? Have you accomplished your purpose with this assignment?
- How effective is your evidence? How might you strengthen your evidence?
- Does every part of your assignment relate back to your argument? How might you enhance these connections?
- Is anything confusing about your language or organisation? How might you clarify your language or organisation?
- Have you made any errors with grammar, punctuation, or spelling? How can you correct these errors?
- Have you made any errors in quotations or in references?
- What might someone who disagrees with you say about your assignment? How can you address these opposing arguments in your assignment?

Complete your assignment by carefully proofreading a printed version of your final draft. Read your assignment out loud to make sure that you have identified any typos, grammatical errors, wordy or incomplete sentences, and other minor mistakes that may negatively affect your grade.