

Questions to Fire Up Our Critical Thinking Skills

Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean? • What's happening? • How should we understand that (e.g., what he or she just said)? • What is the best way to characterize/categorize/classify this? • In this context, what was intended by saying/doing that? • How can we make sense out of this (experience, feeling, or statement)?
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please tell us again your reasons for making that claim. • What is your conclusion/What is it that you are claiming? • Why do you think that? • What are the arguments pro and con? • What assumptions must we make to accept that conclusion? • What is your basis for saying that?
Inference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given what we know so far, what conclusions can we draw? • Given what we know so far, what can we rule out? • What does this evidence imply? • If we abandoned/accepted that assumption, how would things change? • What additional information do we need to resolve this question? • If we believed these things, what would they imply for us going forward? • What are the consequences of doing things that way? • What are some alternatives we haven't yet explored? • Let's consider each option and see where it takes us. • Are there any undesirable consequences that we can and should foresee?
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How credible is that claim? • Why do we think we can trust what this person claims? • How strong are those arguments? • Do we have our facts right? • How confident can we be in our conclusion, given what we now know?
Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the specific findings/results of the investigation? • Please tell us how you conducted that analysis. • How did you come to that interpretation? • Please take us through your reasoning one more time. • Why do you think that (was the right answer/was the solution)?
Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our position on this issue is still too vague; can we be more precise? • How good was our methodology, and how well did we follow it? • Is there a way we can reconcile these two apparently conflicting conclusions? • How good is our evidence? • OK, before we commit, what are we missing? • I'm finding some of our definitions a little confusing; can we revisit what we mean by certain things before making any final decisions?

Source: © 2014 User Manual for the [California Critical Thinking Skills Test](#), published by Insight Assessment. (Used with permission). (Facione, 2015, p. 8)

Facione, P. A. (2015). Critical Thinking: What it is and Why it counts. 8. Hermosa Beach, CA: Measured Reasons, LLC.