

Critical reading form method

Creating a critical reading form is a way of interrogating a source using a set of questions. This helps you to focus on the most important aspects. It also helps you to avoid taking lots of detailed notes you might not use.

Create your reading form

1. Create a Word file to use a template.
2. Open and answer your set of questions for each separate text you read.
3. Save these documents with names that include the author's surname or subject.
4. Organise and file so you can find them again.

Start with the bibliographic details: Author, title, date and so on. You'll need to cite your sources accurately.

Add the location (e.g. main library classmark). You might want to find it again!

What questions would you ask?



What's the main point being made?

What's the main line of reasoning?

What's the main evidence?

Does the evidence support the conclusions offered?

A suggested list

- Full reference.
- Who is the author?
- What is this work about?
- What are the main findings of this work?
- How is this work relevant to my course and/or assignment?
- What are the limitations of this work?
- Useful quotations.

What is/are the author(s) aiming to do?

Why am I reading this?

Is it convincing?

Alternative points of view?

Can I summarise it?

Adapt to suit you

- Have a checklist on a postcard and make handwritten notes using it.
- Use printed paper forms – file by author's surname in a ring binder.
- Use a notebook and type up a summary later.

How can I use my notes?

- To make a point
- To advance an argument
- To test an idea
- To make comparisons
- To develop my own view
- To draw my own conclusions

