

Critical Analysis

Critical analysis means asking questions of your reading material. Instead of accepting things at 'face value', you should look for the evidence and reasoning behind the claims.

Steps for critical analysis:

1. Identify the focus of the assignment: think critically about the requirements. Ask yourself why you are being required to write it, the tutor's expectations and what you need to cover.
2. Employ critical reading skills. Identify and evaluate current evidence. Why are certain arguments successful? What evidence do they use? What are the strengths/weaknesses? Why are other arguments less convincing? Use LDS 'critical notes' sheets to help you.
3. Identify your own perspective on the topic; imagine that you are a lawyer arguing a case. As you read, you will be aware of multiple views on the issue and it is often difficult to decide the 'best' but your role is to weigh up the evidence and identify what is currently the most convincing. You need to have a clear sense of your own point of view and substantial reasons for it.
4. Consider the need to persuade the reader with a well-structured, logical argument. Think about the best way to present the argument to allow the reader to follow the various points. Clearly link each argument to the one before so that it builds towards the conclusion. You want to show your active engagement with the topic and other writers' work on it.
5. Engage in debate. Demonstrate that you have weighed up the arguments, the strengths and weaknesses of different viewpoints.

Your argument needs to show progression from description to analysis and evaluation.

