

Critical Analysis of an Article

This worksheet will guide you through a critical reading of an assigned article or book chapter.

Logic and Argument:

1. The main argument of this article is:
(Paraphrase as accurately as possible.)
2. The most important information in the article is:
(What supporting evidence, facts, experience, or data do the authors provide to support their argument?)
3. The key concept(s) we need to understand in the article are:
(What important ideas do you need to understand in order to understand the authors' line of reasoning?)
4. The main assumption(s) underlying the authors' thinking is/are:
(What are the authors taking for granted [that might be questioned]?)
5. If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are:
(The "so what?" question: Why does this argument matter? Why should we care? What consequences are likely to follow if people take the authors' line of reasoning seriously?)
6. What are your reactions to this argument? Are you convinced? Why or why not?
7. What questions do you have about this article? Do you need more information? Is part of the argument unclear? Is there something the authors haven't considered? What would you ask the author(s) if you spoke with him/her/them?

Writing Style:

7. How do the authors establish authority? (Think about whether the authors seem knowledgeable. Why or why not? What perspectives, biases, or values appear to have a role in the authors' argument? Cite specific examples.)
8. How does the authors' overall style aid their argument? (Think about the overall tone, how the authors form sentences or choose words, the length of passages, etc. Cite specific examples.)
9. How do the authors get your interest? (Think about whether the authors try to get you to identify with them or to care about the subject. Do the authors seem to assume you have particular interests and/or values and use them as the basis for argument? How? Cite specific examples.)