

How good is your Critical Thinking?

Criterion C

Take special note that critical thinking is not achieved by going through a list of characteristics and simply ticking off criteria. It is far more organic and context based. Clarity of communication is also vital in making progress here. For example when to raise a point and exactly how to raise it can influence how aspects of critical thinking are perceived by the examiner.

As a reminder Lekanides (110-11) states three main areas to focus on if you want to improve your critical thinking.

- A. Relevance of research
 - All research materials gathered and used are clearly relevant to the research question
- B. Analysis of research findings
 - The research findings are effectively analysed so as to produce a reasoned argument. Any developing analyses are well supported by relevant evidence
- C. Discussion and evaluation of evidence
 - A coherent and well reasoned argument is developed that is supported by the evidence presented. What's more, a critical evaluation of the source material is provided.

HAVE YOU OFFERED ANY DEFINITIONS IN YOUR EE?

Els Van Geyte offers a useful reminder of how critical thinking can be applied to definitions that you present in your EE

...imagine that you wanted to include a general definition at the start of your essay, but there are many definitions to choose from. You can show that you can think critically by selecting a definition and explain why you want to use that one. This could be because it is the most cited one, the one most commonly used by other scholars, the most comprehensive one, the one that picks up on aspects related to your specific question etc. Your justification will demonstrate that you have read widely, understood what you have read, questioned what the authors wrote and thought about how the issues related to your essay question.

Lekanides goes on to offer a number of questions that will help students improve critical thinking in key areas of the EE.

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING	NOTES
<p>Is your content knowledge accurate and is the source material used to support your claims relevant to the RQ at all times (see Criterion B for more)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a basic expectation since any inaccuracies in content knowledge or irrelevant source material will diminish the potential for good analysis to emerge. - This includes responding to the "who", "what", "where", "how" and "why" questions as well as being able to describe events, processes and methods used accurately. 	
APPLICATION & ANALYSIS	NOTES
<p>What does your research (primary and/or secondary) indicate with regards to your RQ?</p>	
<p>Why did you choose that particular method or approach to answer your RQ? You should consider the suitability of your approach in the main body.</p>	
<p>Are you able to point out any inherent contradictions or alternative viewpoints that need to be considered?</p>	
<p>What limitations or weaknesses have you identified in your source material or methodological approach to the RQ?</p>	
<p>Have you developed mini-analyses or arrived at micro-conclusions to each point you raised in the essay?</p>	
SYNTHESIS & EVALUATION	NOTES
<p>As a result of your research, what have you determined is the core answer (or multiple answers as the case may be) to your RQ?</p>	
<p>Are there any aspects or factors you have not taken into account that need mentioning in your conclusion?</p>	
<p>How definitive a conclusion can you arrive at? What would help make it more definitive?</p>	
<p>How far does your conclusion differ from or challenge conventional wisdom or approaches?</p>	
<p>Are your conclusions consistent with your argument as it develops in the main body?</p>	

