

Questions to Help You Think About Critical Thinking

How do the examples of critical thinking you engaged in this semester or included in your work differ from one another? What are their similarities?

How do the assignments you did to practice critical thinking differ from your peers (as you have talked about in class or from what you've read on the website)?

After identifying examples of critical thinking in the work you've completed this semester, WHY are these considered critical thinking? What about them makes them a unique way of thinking about literature or other media?

Do you think that people should always take a critical approach to the books and other media they interact with? Why or why not? What are the benefits or limitations of doing so?

How do the examples of critical thinking you explored in class relate to other ways you engage in critical thinking outside of class? When do you think critically about texts when you are away from school and why?

Besides when you are interacting with books and movies, when else do you engage with critical thinking? Why might this be useful or important?

How would you define critical thinking? If this is a unique way of thinking about texts, what characterizes that way of thinking? What makes it different from the ways that other people might read books or interact with other media?

What are some of the skills or actions that you do when you engage in critical thinking? What does it mean to do these kinds of skills?

What does it mean to do analysis or interpret texts? What do you do when you analyze a work of literature? How does this fit with the idea of critical thinking?

You've heard me say to "dig deeper" into a story? What does this mean and what does it involve? What kinds of things might you be looking for or thinking about when you dig deeper into a book?

What benefit is there in thinking critically or taking an analytical approach to literature? How does that benefit change depending on a reader—a child, an adult, a teacher, a scholar, etc?

If critical thinking is a specific approach to a text, what do you need to know in order to take that approach? How can you gain what you need to know to do so?

Critical thinking is often shown through writing about books. How do different ways of writing about books demonstrate critical thinking or a literary approach? Compare and contrast the kind of thinking that happens to produce each of these examples.

If you were a teacher, how can you encourage your students to think critically about literature? Be specific—what kinds of questions might you ask them or activities might you do, and how do these questions/activities/etc foster the skill of critical thinking?

If critical thinking or a literary approach isn't just one way of thinking, but many, how do these actions or activities interact and/or overlap?

What kinds of activities (including different kinds of writing and/or discussion) require critical thinking? What do these activities ask you to do? How are they similar or different from each other?

How is critical thinking demonstrated differently in written and spoken activities?

How does a class discussion engage in critical thinking? As an instructor, how might you try to foster critical thinking in class discussion? How will what you do help you students to do this kind of thinking?

Which of the activities this semester required the most critical thinking? Why?

Where might you find people engaging in a literary approach to text? Why might people choose these venues to do so?

If you have to define critical thinking in ten words or less, what would you say?

How does critical thinking or a literary approach fit in with our discussions about ideology? Why might this be an important connection?

Does critical thinking happen in situations other than reading or engaging with media (television, film, etc)? When, how and what difference do you find with this way of thinking in other settings?

Do you engage with critical thinking every time you talk about a text? Why or why not?

What skill do you think is most important in order to consider a text in a critical way and why? What skills seem less important?

How does description or summary of plot (what happens in a story) fit in with critical thinking? Is this critical thinking or not?

Is critical thinking only something that happens in a classroom? When else might you engage in this kind of activity and for what purpose?

What is the purpose of critical thinking? How might different individuals answer this question in different ways?

How do different people express critical thinking using different modalities (writing, speech, visual, tactile, etc)? How might individuals express their thinking more effectively in one way or another, and why would these all constitute critical thinking?

How does the idea of critical thinking interact with the concept of learning?

Look at the book and film reviews online and choose one that is particularly effective. Why is it more useful than others? How does this relate to critical thinking?

How do the articles that scholars write (such as the ones you created a handout for) engage in critical thinking? How is the work these writers do similar or different from other writings you do?