

## EVALUATION

The analysis breaks down the information provided in the article. The evaluation of this information, the way it is presented, its validity and application. This is the main focus of your critique.

### Evaluation of Topic

	Y	N
Is the topic of the article clearly defined or whether it is ambiguous		
Is there an implicit argument to the paper? ( <i>That being implied or suggested but not actually expressed</i> )		
Are all the key words well defined?		
Is the argument logical?		
Is the text well clearly written in an orderly way?		

### Evaluation of the evidence

- Is the evidence convincing or perceptive?
- If there isn't any experiential or experimental evidence given, why not? If there is, why?
- Is the evidence accurate and is it sufficient to back up the points being argued
- Is the text and evidence presented appropriate for the intended audience? *E.g. If teachers are the intended audience, then it would be inappropriate, in most cases, for a computer specialist to present an article from a highly technical perspective.*

### Evaluation of the argument

- How does this article relate to other reading which you have done in this subject area?
- Was the counter argument fully considered? What was it?
- What assumptions have been made and how do these assumptions weaken or impact the argument?
- Were the implications of accepting the argument of the article fully explained?
- Are there aspects to the paper which raise a strong response? If so why?
- Where the argument of the article leads to possible applications of the theory, were these practical or meaningful?

## STRUCTURE OF CRITIQUE

Jeffrey Cahan, (2004) suggests that you can structure your critique in two ways:

### First method:

- Itemise the argument into main point, reasons for argument, support offered
- Discuss the strength and weakness of the articles assumptions
- Identify the article's audience
- Assess the value of the overall argument.

### Second method:

- Identify and explain the author's ideas and perspective and the audience. Include direct quotes from the article to illustrate your points (background)
- Explain what you think about the article, based on the evaluation as listed above. Focus on specific weaknesses and strengths in the article (One per paragraph)
- For each point you mention, include sections from the article (quote or paraphrase) to illustrate your point and bring in references to provide evidence in support of your critique.

## REFERENCES

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## CRITIQUE OF AN ACADEMIC ARTICLE



*'A critique analyses, interprets and evaluates a text, answering the questions how? Why? And how well?'* (Jeffrey Cahan, 2004)

**This brochure will provide help in:**

- Understanding what is meant by a 'critique'**
- Looking at the background picture**
- Analysing the article**
- Evaluating the article**
- Structuring your critique.**

## AN ACADEMIC ARTICLE

- Academic articles are often written in the form of an argument
- The author takes a particular stand on an issue (often stated in their thesis statement)
- The author presents research evidence and facts in support of the argument
- Well written academic articles are based on a great deal of research and the author has drawn conclusions from a range of sources.

## WHAT IS A CRITIQUE

*'What the reader of a critique is really interested in is hearing your assessment'*  
(Jones, 2001)

A critique is a specific style of essay which identifies the author's ideas and evaluates them based on current theory and research.

- In order to do a meaningful critique you need to understand where the author is coming from and why they are writing this particular article
- In a critique you need to respond to the article not simply summarise it
- You need to explain why you respond to the text in a certain way and to support your argument with your readings
- Begin by regarding the article as a whole and building up a background picture.

## BACKGROUND

- **Who is the author (s) and what is the author's background** (discipline, research history, political history if relevant)?  
*This will give you insight into their personal perspective, for example, an article on the use of technology in schools written by an IT specialist will have a different perspective from that of an educationalist.*

- **When was the article written?** Is it based on current issues or not and is the article relevant to today's research?
- **Who is the intended audience?**  
*This can also lead us to some understanding of the purpose of the article*
- **What sources does the author use?**  
*This can lead us to understand the theoretical basis of the article*
- **Has the author focused** on a particular area of research or on a specific point of view?
- **What general assumptions** does the author make?  
*Assumptions can be cultural, social or theoretical.*

## ANALYSIS

*'What is the author's particular concern?'*  
(Metcalf, 2002)

Analysis of the article is necessary in order to establish the general purpose, evidence, limitations, and the structure of an article.

- Your analysis of the article determines exactly what it is the author is saying and how they are saying it
- Your analysis needs to be thorough, as this is the information on which you will base your evaluation
- It is important to refer to your analysis during your critique, although describing the article should comprise no more than a third of your critique.

### Purpose

You can usually ascertain the author's purpose within the introduction e.g. their thesis statement, what is it they are trying to prove?

- What is the purpose of the article?
- What arguments are being used to persuade the intended audience to believe?

## Evidence

- You have identified the sources; now identify what each source is saying in support of your author's argument
- What evidence is being used to support the argument?
- Section headings will give a good insight into supporting points given for an argument
- Does the author present the evidence to back up a point made, to illustrate a point, or to engender sympathy towards an argument? e.g. startling statistics
- Is there any experiential or experimental analysis given (statistical evidence), and is it qualitative or quantitative?

## Limitations

- What limitations has the author identified? e.g. time limit, sample size, information base, the degree of further research required, and the degree to which the article can be applied
- Are both sides of the argument presented and supported with references?

## SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

In summary, the information you need before you begin your critique includes:

1. The background and discipline of the author
2. The main issue being discussed
3. The point the author is arguing on that issue
4. The sources used to support this argument
5. The specific evidence used to support the argument
6. Any experiential or experimental analysis given (statistical evidence)
7. Any limitations identified.