

Checklist for Critical Thought

Checklist excerpted from *"The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools"* by Dr. Richard Paul and Dr. Linda Elder. 2008 special edition.

1. All reasoning has a purpose.
 - State your purpose clearly.
 - Distinguish your purpose from related purposes.
 - Check periodically to be sure you are still on target.
 - Choose significant and realistic purposes.

2. All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem.
 - State the question clearly and precisely.
 - Express the question in several ways to clarify its meaning and scope.
 - Break the question into sub-questions.
 - Distinguish questions that have definitive answers from those that are a matter of opinion and from those that require consideration of multiple viewpoints.

3. All reasoning is based on assumption.
 - Clearly identify your assumptions and determine whether they are justifiable.
 - Consider how your assumptions are shaping your point of view.

4. All reasoning is done from some point of view.
 - Identify your point of view.
 - Seek other points of view and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
 - Strive to be fair-minded in evaluating all points of view.

5. All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence.
 - Restrict your claims to those supported by the data you have.
 - Search for information that opposes your position as well as information that supports it.
 - Make sure that all information is clear, accurate, and relevant to the question at issue.
 - Make sure you have gathered sufficient information.

6. All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
 - Identify key concepts and explain them clearly.
 - Consider alternative concepts or alternative definitions of concepts.
 - Make sure you are using concepts with care and precision.

7. All reasoning contains inferences or interpretations by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data.
 - Infer only what the evidence implies.
 - Check inferences for their consistency with each other.
 - Identify assumptions that lead to inferences.

8. All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.
 - Trace the implications and consequences that follow from your reasoning.
 - Search for negative and positive implications
 - Consider all possible consequences.