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HOW TO

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**CULTURE IN
SCHOOLS**

FEATURED ACCREDITATION

Institutions demonstrating
dedication to quality
learning

CONTENTS

01

How to Promote a Reading Culture in Schools

Reading is universal. Every child deserves to read. Readers who adore books for life can decipher, segment, and combine, and they appreciate prose. School reading cultures must be robust to foster a lifelong love of reading.

02

What Is Critical Reading? A Definition For Learning

Critical reading: Reading to comprehend. It entails questioning the author's aim, the text's structure and purpose, and word and phrase definitions. Critical readers additionally examine a text's context and audience interpretation.

03

Featured Accreditation

A list of institutes successfully cleared IAO's accreditation process and earned full accreditation. Learn about their path to full certification with the International Accreditation Organization.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Reading is a crucial skill that forms the foundation of education. It's not just about being able to read books but also about developing critical thinking skills, expanding knowledge, and exploring new perspectives. Libraries play a crucial role in promoting reading by providing diverse books and resources for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Unfortunately, many people today read less than they used to, which can harm their education and overall intellectual development. With the rise of digital media and other distractions, it's easy to overlook the importance of reading and libraries.

Therefore, we must continue to promote the value of reading and libraries in education. This can be done by encouraging students to visit their local libraries and participate in reading programs, incorporating reading assignments into the curriculum, and providing teachers with the necessary resources to support reading instruction.

By emphasizing the importance of reading and libraries in education, we can ensure that future generations have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed personally and professionally. So let's prioritize reading and libraries in education and help students unlock their full potential.



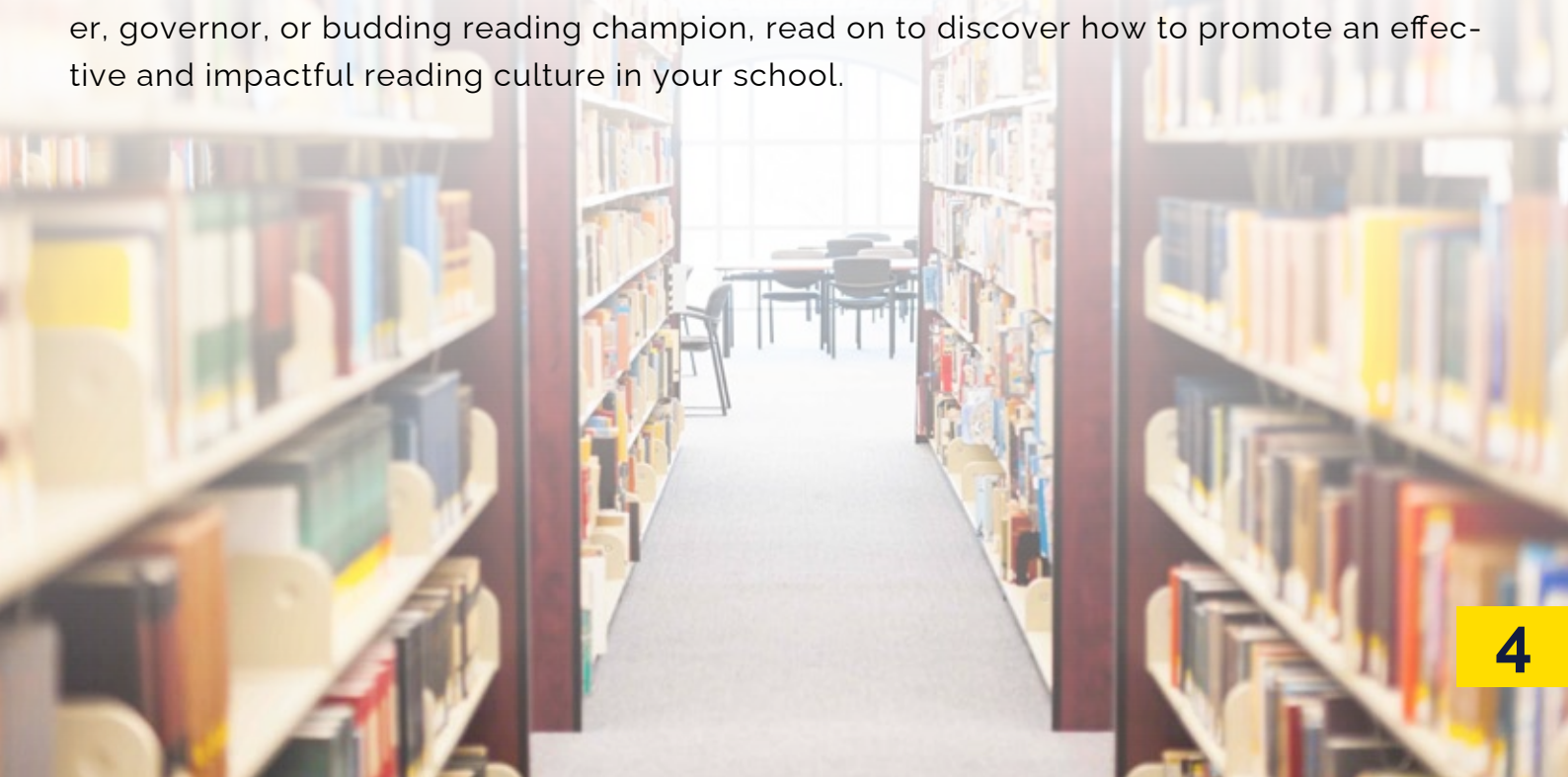


HOW TO PROMOTE A READING CULTURE IN SCHOOLS

HANNAH HAWTHORNE

Reading transcends class, race, age, and gender. It's a free magic carpet ride to anywhere on Earth (or beyond) at any point in time. Every child, regardless of age or ability, deserves to be able to access the written word. Readers who go on to develop a lifelong love of literature not only decode, segment, and blend with ease, they have a genuine adoration for the power of prose. We must build a strong reading culture in schools to stimulate a lasting love of reading. In this article, we'll address the question: what is a reading culture? We'll also look at the importance of creating a reading culture in schools and the innumerable benefits it brings.

Finally, we'll end by outlining how you can promote a reading culture in just 15 steps. Whatever your role, head teacher, head of the department, literacy lead, classroom teacher, governor, or budding reading champion, read on to discover how to promote an effective and impactful reading culture in your school.





WHAT IS A READING CULTURE?

A reading culture is an environment where reading is championed, valued, respected, and encouraged. Reading lies at the heart of the curriculum, and it's of the utmost importance to a child's personal, social, and academic success and general well-being.

Creating a reading culture should not be the responsibility of an individual. It takes dedication, perseverance, and effort. It's led by an enthusiastic and dedicated senior leadership team and advocated by every pupil, parent, career, and staff member in the school community. In a report commissioned by the National Literacy Trust, research indicates that "if reading is to become a lifelong habit, then people must see themselves as participants in a community that views reading as a significant and enjoyable activity. Parents and the home environment are essential in fostering a love of reading."

A reading culture takes more than quality-first teaching. Where a reading culture exists, children read of their own free will regularly. Students select their reading material at a time and place of their choosing. They are willing and active participants who anticipate the satisfaction they'll get from picking up a book.

To ensure children don't experience reading difficulty and demotivation, we should ensure students become fluent and engaged readers from an early age. Creating a reading culture where students are disaffected, hold negative attitudes, and whose reading ages are well below chronological can be challenging but not impossible.



WHY ARE READING CULTURES IMPORTANT IN SCHOOLS?

Building a strong reading culture puts reading at the forefront of school improvement. A creative and exciting reading culture not only breeds capable and committed readers but also boosts well-being, community connectedness, and student outcomes.

In a recent report from The Department for Education, Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards, states that reading is "the key unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum."

Children will need high literacy levels in so many aspects of their lives. Everywhere children look, there's a sea of information for them to digest – in school, at home, on public transport, on the roads, and on digital technology interfaces. Not only is reading required for success in future employment, but an ability to read will help children in future relationships, when running a household, and when navigating all aspects of their personal lives.

Reading fluency is a strong indicator of achievement in further education, higher education, and future employment. The government acknowledges that reading can achieve something teachers and policymakers have been trying to attain for years: to lessen, or even eradicate, the impact of early life disadvantage.

In short, only competent readers can access the wonders of the curriculum and thus improve their life chances.



HOW TO BUILD AND PROMOTE A STRONG READING CULTURE

• Live and Breathe Literature

Place reading at the core of your school's improvement plan. Head teachers should actively prioritize reading. Their aim should be for every student to become a fluent and motivated reader.

Create a mission statement to drive future agendas, targets, and personal development plans. Ensure the language is accessible to everyone in the school community, including pupils. Give prominence to this statement on displays throughout the school.

• Spark Curiosity Within the School Environment

Create vibrant displays and unique installations which celebrate a love of all things reading. Think a bubbling cauldron in KS3, with Macbeth quotes hanging from the ceiling, or a school book tree in reception, filled with reviews and recommendations.

Place keywords throughout the building, and accompany them with visual stimuli. For example, an equipment display of the main items students use in physical education, with the name of each apparatus clearly labeled on each item.

Create reading nooks throughout the school where pupils can escape from the world and sit and read their favorite books.

• Keep Talking

Build a language-rich environment where adults talk with children regularly throughout the day, and students can get involved in various conversations. This will boost their vocabulary awareness and support them with their comprehension.

Where possible, feature prose in every assembly and form time session. Read stories or extracts of texts in assemblies. Ask staff to share their favorite poem or character description. Similarly, invite children to share a text which they find inspiring.

• **Make your Library Space Magical**

Transform your school library space to make sure it's creative, engaging, and welcoming to all. Fill it with colorful displays and comfy seating. Yes, a brand-new library can be a costly investment, but a re-design doesn't have to cost the Earth. See if any local businesses would be prepared to partner with you in the process or donate materials. Equally, consider enlisting the help of local college students or willing parent volunteers to help with the painting. Ensure every child is timetabled in the library, ideally, once a week, so that they can renew books regularly—host library inductions to inform children how to use the library safely and respectfully. Once the library is complete, ask older students to run lunchtime story clubs, request volunteer helpers to restock shelves, and keep the room neat.

• **Run DEAR**

DEAR, or Drop Everything And Read, is a daily designated reading program. Run on a rolling Rota, DEAR gives every child 15 minutes every day to sit and read in a quiet, calm environment conducive to reading. Everyone in the school community should drop everything and get involved, from the head teacher to the caretaker. Through DEAR, the task becomes a habitual and consistent action.

• **Host Guest Speakers and Organize Trips**

Memorable experiences can enhance deeper learning, so allow your students to get out and about on as many curriculum-linked school trips as possible. Think The Imperial War Museum, a forest, a National Trust property, or the local farm. Let the children hear extracts of the text while on location. Immerse them in the narrative.

Similarly, invite guest speakers to come in and talk to the children about their texts. Schools might need more money to host authors, but many community representatives will visit for free or at a nominal fee. Find links to enrich the curriculum and engage with the broader community, whether it's a picture book for the early years or a KS4 set text. For example, a local artist could lead an outdoor craft and painting day linked to the children's current text. Alternatively, a police officer and local solicitor might visit the children for a question-and-answer session about a character's wrongdoings. Equally, local college students might be willing to organize and deliver a drama session linked to your chosen text.



• Create Competitions

Motivation is a critical factor in learning outcomes, determining their success and quality. A report commissioned by The University of Maryland, Guthrie, and Wigfield found that "outstanding teachers invest substantial time and energy in supporting students' motivation and engagement in reading."

For some students to become intrinsically motivated, staff may first have to use extrinsic motivation. In specific demographics, we may have to incentivize the act of reading until it becomes as natural as breathing.

Staff should offer children acknowledgment and praise for their reading achievements, however small they may be. The school's behavior policy should detail how the team can do this effectively. For example, staff could be given six wristbands every half-term to give out to the children who've shown the most commitment or made the most progress in their reading. These wristbands can then be exchanged for a prize.

Using on-screen reading programs, such as Accelerated Reader, students can take online quizzes on their reading books. If they receive a particular percentage pass mark, they'll begin to build up a word count. Schools can use this information to set children-specific targets to achieve by the end of the year.

Teachers can build a bespoke reward scheme around their online reading program. For example, pupils could get a treat from the reading treat box if they pass their book quiz at 80% or more, or two if it's 100%. Work with the school's parents and friends association, or contact local businesses for sponsorship to fund these prize boxes. Similarly, hold a word count war to see which classes can achieve each term's highest word count.

• Empower Children with Their Next Steps

If we want children to take ownership of their reading, they need to be able to verbalize their next steps. Clear and accessible targets should be used to boost children's self-esteem rather than to make them more accountable. A consistent, whole-school approach to target setting will highlight the profile of reading across the curriculum and remind students that ***we're all readers, and we're all in this together.***



• Host Events

Throughout the year, we host events to celebrate all things reading. Whether it's Shakespeare in the Sun, campfire storytelling, book-themed cake sales, or second-hand book fairs, use all the monies raised to replenish your library stock to keep it fresh and inviting. At the end of the academic year, why not organize a reading festival to celebrate the children's reading achievements? Think fairground rides, bouncy castles, makeup artists, tribute acts, and sweet stalls.

Utilize your Students to support the school in raising the reading profile, invite students to help. Create a peer-to-peer reading scheme where an older, more competent student supports a child whose reading age is below their chronological age. Similarly, ask for volunteers to be part of a reading committee – who meet regularly to discuss the school improvement targets, reading incentives, and ideas to further promote a strong reading culture.

• Work with Local Businesses

Reach out to big companies and local businesses for support in meeting the school's reading targets. This could be reading posters from a local book shop, a gift experience from an outdoor adventure company, or a voucher from the local shoe shop to use as a reading prize.

Ask members of the reading committee to write to local suppliers to see if they would be willing to help. For example, they may be ready to provide hot chocolate and marshmallows for the next campfire reading event. Contact the local press to feature critical events and mention the names of suppliers and businesses who have helped.

• Make Sure Your Titles are Engaging and Accessible

Children should be aware of which library texts are pitched at their level. By creating a color code linked to reading age ability, students can confidently and independently select texts which are accessible. This will help them to become assured and resilient readers.



• Celebrate Literacy Days

Whatever literacy day it is, celebrate it. Events such as World Book Day, Roald Dahl Day, and National Poetry Day bring fun-filled opportunities for students and help to build a vibrant reading culture across the school.

Furthermore, why not create your days to celebrate? In October, could you host a Harry Potter Day? Think dressing up, themed school dinners, potions, spells, drama, broomstick races, and animal encounters.

• Get Parents and Careers Involved

Not all students have the support of committed parents or careers at home. As a result, engage with parents and careers as much as possible. Run webinars to introduce the school's online reading programs. Host live question-and-answer sessions to inform parents how they can help from home. Run family reading challenges and competitions, and host a virtual book club for parents and children.

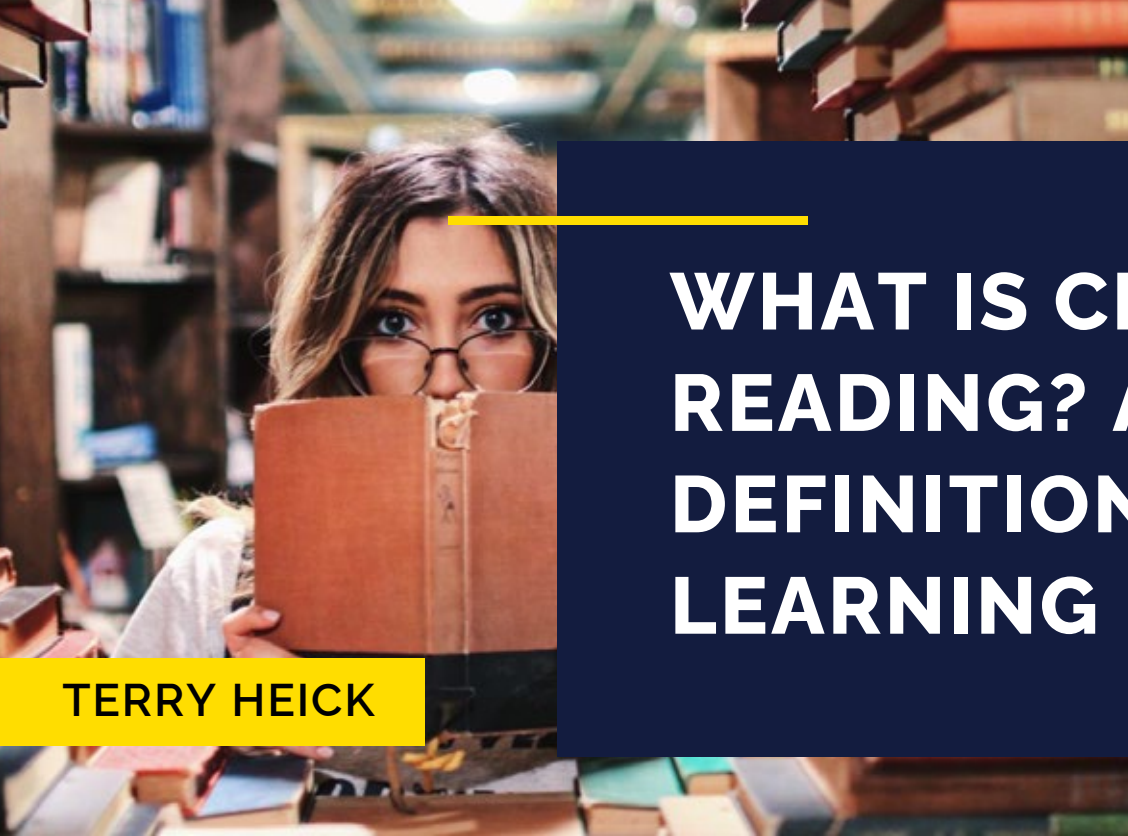
• Unite your Staff

Take all your staff along with you on your school's reading journey. Involve them at every step of the way. A committed team can achieve beautiful things. Ask for their feedback, and value their contributions.

Train them on the reading programs the children will use, so they can feel informed when providing support, and keep them up to date with effective differentiation strategies. All teachers should be aware of children's reading ages when planning, as the materials used must be appropriate and accessible to all students. Providing glossaries, word mats, and visual stimuli, for example, can help weaker readers access the curriculum.

Finally, continually make staff aware of the incredible power they possess. Hearing a teacher read a text aloud can be transformative for some pupils. Teachers who read with passion and varied intonation can capture hearts and minds.





WHAT IS CRITICAL READING? A DEFINITION FOR LEARNING

TERRY HEICK

The Definition Of Critical Reading

Critical reading is reading with the purpose of critical examination of the text and its ideas. To add more to that definition, we might say, "Critical reading is reading with the purpose of critical examination of the text and its implicit and explicit themes and ideas."

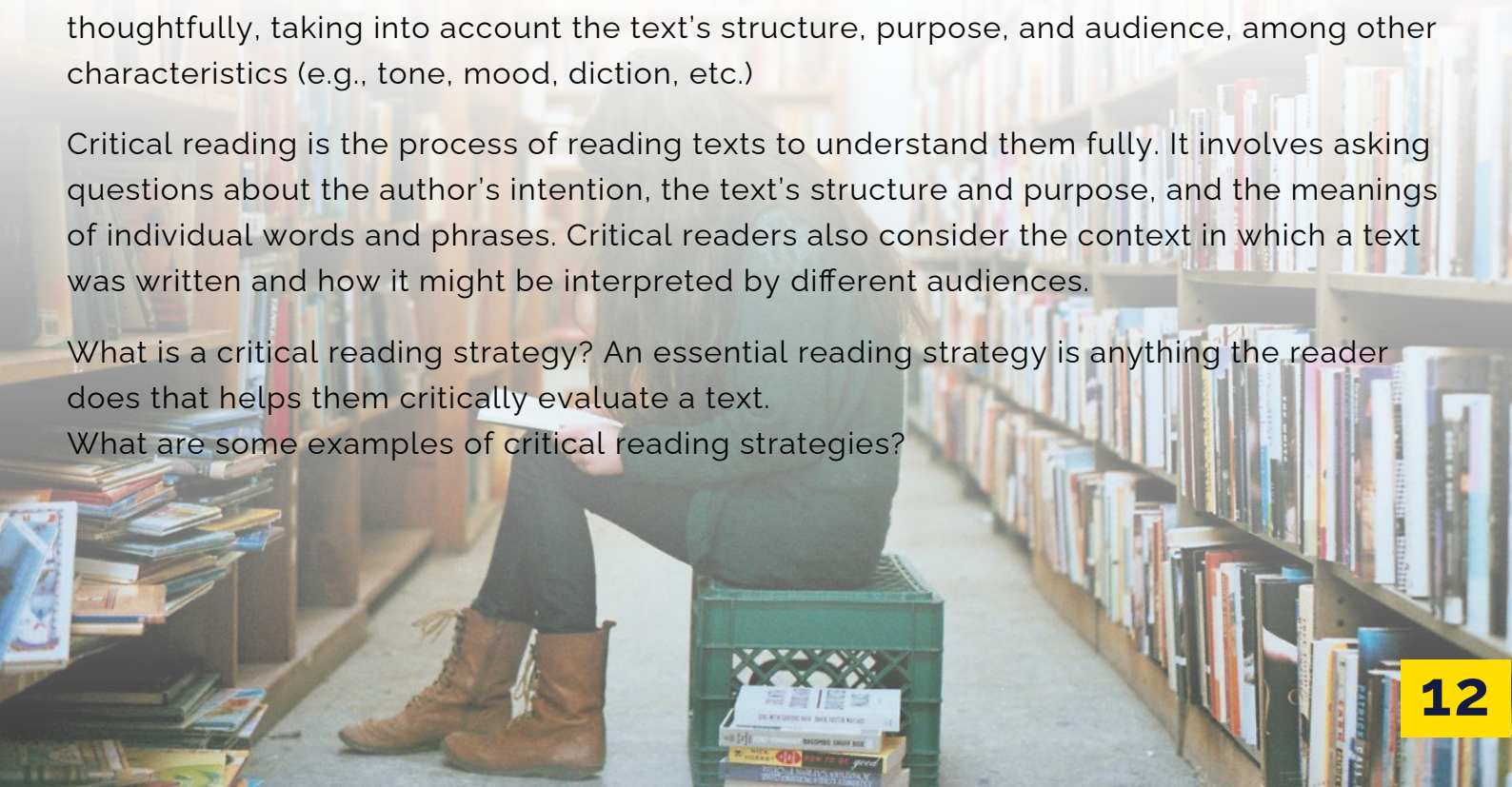
What is Critical Reading?

To expand on the simple definition above, critical reading is the close, careful reading of a text to understand it fully and assess its merits. It is not simply a matter of skimming a text or reading for plot points; instead, critical reading requires that you read attentively and thoughtfully, taking into account the text's structure, purpose, and audience, among other characteristics (e.g., tone, mood, diction, etc.)

Critical reading is the process of reading texts to understand them fully. It involves asking questions about the author's intention, the text's structure and purpose, and the meanings of individual words and phrases. Critical readers also consider the context in which a text was written and how it might be interpreted by different audiences.

What is a critical reading strategy? An essential reading strategy is anything the reader does that helps them critically evaluate a text.

What are some examples of critical reading strategies?





CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES

What is Critical Reading?

- **Inferring:** Reading between the lines' is identifying and examining implicit messages and biases.
- **Claim/Counter-Claim:** Itemizing each and how they work/don't work together in a specific text; concept mapping can be helpful here.
- **Journaling:** While or after reading to reflect both on the text and the process of evaluating that text.
- **The Contrarian:** Viewing the text from a specific perspective other than your own—often the opposite of your beliefs, opinion, or attitude.



Marking
the Text



Monitoring
Understanding



Adjusting
Reading Rate



Rereading

SPQ: Stop, Paraphrase, and Question

Critical Lenses

Reading a text while 'seeing' that text through a specific concept or category—including socioeconomic, historical, gender, race, sexuality, and other 'concepts' or realities; this can help uncover bias, create new meaning previously inaccessible to the reader and, perhaps most importantly, help the reader understand the subjectivity of reading and how much of an impact our own biases have on our understanding of both texts we read and the world around us.

Why is Critical Reading Important?

Critical reading is essential because it allows you to read and analyze a text critically, breaking it down into its parts and assessing its strengths and weaknesses. It also helps you understand the author's purpose in writing the text and how it relates to your life.

As the process of reading texts with a focus on understanding and evaluating the arguments and evidence presented, critical reading involves:

- Asking questions about the text.
- Making connections to other readers.
- Thinking critically about the author's opinion.

Essential reading is necessary for success in school and life because it allows you to assess information critically and make informed decisions.



How to Read Critically

To read critically, you only need to read to identify and evaluate the 'quality' of a text. Quality can mean different things depending on the purpose and context of a text. Note the quality here differs from the 'quality' of literature, film, or other fiction. In these cases, specific hallmarks of quality certainly exist, but they relate to the ability to convey a compelling vision (e.g., tell a 'good story'). The use of dialogue to establish characters, the use of setting to ground conflicts, and the weaving of a unifying narrative through the course of dozens of small events, each done to help the reader slowly uncover some truth about themselves or the world around them—these are the kinds of practices that help determine the quality of fiction. In non-fiction form—essays, for example—quality is concerned more with the clarity and relevance of a specific claim and the author's ability to demonstrate the importance and truth of that claim.

Wikipedia offers a strong example of the need for critical reading:

"The psychologist Cyril Burt is known for his studies on the effect of heredity on intelligence. Shortly after he died, his studies of inheritance and intelligence came into disrepute after evidence emerged indicating he had falsified research data. A 1994 paper by William H. Tucker is illuminative on how "critical reading" was performed in the discovery of the falsified data and in many famous psychologists' "non-critical reading" of Burt's papers. Tucker shows that the recognized experts in intelligence research blindly accepted Cyril Burt's research even though it was without scientific value and probably directly faked: They wanted to believe that IQ is hereditary and considered uncritically empirical claims supporting this view. This paper thus demonstrates how critical reading (and the opposite) may be related to beliefs, interests, and power structures."





TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE CRITICAL READING

Critical reading is analyzing a text to understand its meaning and to assess its argument. When you critically read, you ask yourself questions about the author's purpose, the evidence they provide, and the logic of their argument.

- Who is saying what to whom? Who is the author, what is their message, and who is that message for?
- Is this true? By what standard?
- Does the thesis pass the 'So what?' Challenge? Put another way, are the claims being made compelling and significant? Worth understanding?
- What is explicitly stated? What is implied? What is the relationship between the two?
- What are the underlying assumptions of the text and its claims?
- Does the text's knowledge (facts, truths, information, data, etc.) represent our current best understanding of things as they are today? If not, what has changed and why? And how does that shift impact the strength and meaning of the text itself?
- What here is a fact, and what is opinion?
- What is the significance of this text?
- What are the claims made by this text? Are these claims evident? Relevant? Compelling? New? That is, has this been said before?
- What reasons are given to support those claims? Are these reasons aligned with the shares?
- That is, is the claim-evidence reasoning precise?

By formulating questions like these, you can not only guide your comprehension of the text but also begin to learn how arguments (and the texts that contain them) are constructed. This can help students form rational, strong opinions of themselves while also providing practice analyzing and evaluating the merit of ideas put forth by others (these can be formal academic arguments or informal 'arguments'/claims made in honest conversations on a day-to-day basis in their lives).



THE MINDSET OF CRITICAL READING

We bring ourselves to reading, and the 'self' we were is forever changed, if only ever so slightly. Knowledge acquisition changes us, and reading is a process of knowledge acquisition. The exact text read five years ago has a new meaning because the purpose is not in the text but in your mind, which has changed over that period. This realization illustrates the necessity for critical reading (and thinking while reading).

As human beings, we misunderstand too much and lack too much information and perspective. This leads to humility being one of the essential critical reading strategies. By bringing that mindset to a text, we stand a better chance of evaluating the claim-reasoning strength of a text and, in doing so, stand a better chance of improving our knowledge and critical reasoning skills.

When we read—really, really read—for a while, a normally very loud part of us grows quiet and limp while our mind begins unraveling new ideas. Then, pushing further, we look inward, turning our skin inside out to expose our pulsing, naked nerves to the text. We erect a sense of self to withstand the sheer momentum of the text, then rummage through the debris when it's all over to see what's left behind."

Reading is engaging in what was said, comprehending is interesting in what was meant, and critical reading is engaging in what is *true*.

Third Quarterly

Featured **IAO** Accreditations

IAO saw an overwhelming amount of institutes applying for accreditation, eager to be recognized globally through our seal and certificate. Here in the IAO featured accreditations, we include the most dedicated institutes striving to provide high-quality education and are certified globally by IAO.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation To The **North East Council Of Allied Health Science**

North East Council of Allied Health Science has worked for its vision that aims to lead and be recognized as a training institution, prospective, of professionals of excellence, generating new knowledge, granting values and principles in accordance with the development of the common good, from an innovative seal, which is distinguished by its community of learning globally.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation To **International Focus Schools**

International Focus Schools has achieved our complete accreditation after passing our review process. The institute has labored for years to realize its vision, which is to lead and be recognized as a prospective training institution for professionals of excellence, generating new knowledge, granting values and principles in accordance with the development of the common good, from an innovative seal, which is distinguished by its global learning community.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation To **Filipino Nightingales International**

Filipino Nightingales International has passed our scrutiny system and achieved full accreditation. The institute has been striving for its vision, which is to become a world leader in the education of future professionals by creating new knowledge, awarding values and principles in line with the advancement of the common good, and establishing a unique community of learners around the world through its innovative seal, for quite some time.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation To **International Face Designing School**

After extensive examination, International Face Designing School has achieved complete accreditation. The institute has been striving for its vision, which is to become a world leader in the education of future professionals by creating new knowledge, awarding values and principles in line with the advancement of the common good, and establishing a unique community of learners around the world through its innovative seal.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation To **BIA Beauty International Academy – By Live Reflections**

BIA Beauty International Academy by Live Reflections has passed our scrutiny system and has achieved our full accreditation. For years, the institute has worked for its vision that aims to lead and be recognized as a training institution, prospective, of professionals of excellence, generating new knowledge, granting values and principles in accordance with the development of the common good, from an innovative seal, which is distinguished by its community of learning globally.

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