

SUPPORTING CRITICAL THINKING

Prepared by Thinkers Meet Up

ASK QUESTIONS

About everything. In many different ways.

ALLOW MISTAKES

Making mistakes is part of critical thinking. If you are going to ask questions, you will find errors. Make mistakes a welcomed part of learning.

ACTIVE READING AND LISTENING

Encourage questions about what you read and watch - yes, talk through movies!

USE MULTIPLE SOURCES

Try to see stories and information from multiple perspectives.

KEEP COMMUNICATION OPEN

Critical discussion require respect and kindness.

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Ask Questions.

The basis of critical thinking is asking questions! There is a reason Socrates – from whom we get the idea of the Socratic Method – is known for his sharp questions. So encourage asking questions. And ask questions yourself. About everything! And encourage questions that move from 'what' to WHY and HOW. Why do you think that? Why do you like chocolate? Why do you think your team is better?

Acknowledge errors.

Critical thinking requires being willing to acknowledge that we all make mistakes. As we question our actions, our beliefs... we might find that we were mistaken. It is important to create an atmosphere where we see making mistakes as part of learning, not as a source of shame.

Engage actively with information

Don't be a passive taker of information. Ask who put together this information? Why? What sources did they use? Why is this television show so interesting?

Use multiple sources

All sources are their own perspective. Try to see an issue from different perspectives before deciding what you think. Try to find sources from other countries, in other languages, from different authors, from different years. The more perspectives you see, the more you can see nuance and become a more sophisticated thinker.

Keep communication open

Asking questions, answering questions, realising you were wrong... this requires vulnerability. These conversations can only happen in caring, respectful conversations. If you get defensive about questions, the questions will stop. If you get offensive with your questions, you will not get good answers. Develop communication that is kind and gentle. If you get truth by destroying those around you, you have missed the bigger picture.



Fun Critical Thinking Exercises

- 1 Think about your favourite colour. Why is it your favourite? Does it make you feel a certain way? Does it remind you of something?
2. Find a newspaper article about your country from a different country or two . How do they present your country?
3. Think about categories. What makes a cat, a cat, and not a dog? When does green stop being green and become blue? Create a new category such as 'all the things that make you feel happy' or 'all the things that remind you of country x' . Think about what rules you use to decide what goes in the category.
4. Watch/listen to adverts. Discuss how they are trying to persuade you. What is their argument? What is their strategy?
5. Discuss problems with no simple solution. Everything goes here, from animal rights, to the setting of country borders, to deciding who gets the slice piece of cake.
6. Writing and drawing. When we put our ideas on paper, we are forced to clarify what we think, what we want to say, how we want to say it - how we want to draw it.
7. Experiment. Try new ways to our water. Or the best way to launch a ball as far as possible. Discuss what you are trying and why. Think about what worked well and why it did, or did not.

Remember - learning is a journey. Enjoy. And don't be afraid to say 'I don't know' or 'I was wrong' we are all learning together.

