CRITICAL READING

Critical reading is an important part of critical thinking and critical writing in your studies. Critical reading involves a deeper examination of the text and questions whether it is accurate, including analysing the veracity of the supporting points and possible counterarguments.

How to Read Critically?

Examine the evidence or arguments presented
Check out any influences on the argument or evidence
What are the limitations of the study design or focus?
Any interpretations?
Are you prepared to accept the author’s arguments, opinions and ideas?

Evaluate what you read
No one has to believe what you say and you don’t have to believe what anyone else says or writes, unless there is enough evidence to suggest otherwise
What is the strength of the evidence?

On its own, evidence cannot contribute to academic debate. The interpretation and presentation of that evidence within an argument allows the evidence to make a contribution.

What is an Argument in Critical Reading?

The term ‘argument’ in this context means the carefully constructed rationale for the enquiry, and for the place of its results within the academic arena. It will explain for example:

- why the authors considered that what they did was worth doing;
- why it was worth doing in that particular way;
- why the data collected, or the material selected, were the most appropriate;
- how the conclusions drawn link to the wider context of their enquiry.

Even in the most technical and scientific disciplines, the presentation of argument will always involve elements that can be examined and questioned. For example, you could ask:
• Why did the writer select that particular topic of enquiry in the first place?
• Why did the writer decide to use that particular methodology, choose that specific method, and conduct the work in that way?
• Why did the writer select that particular process of analysis?

Source: University of Leicester