

The Art of Engaging Students through

# Critical Thinking



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# BACKWARD QUESTIONS

A. In pairs, do the following activity. The answer giver tells the question giver if he or she is right. After a few wrong guesses, give the correct question. For this activity, participants should share answers about their personal lives.

## EXAMPLE:

Participant A: A teacher  
Participant B: What is your profession?  
20 years ago  
Participant A: When did you start working?  
I have 3.  
Participant B: How many children do you have?  
35 every semester  
Participant A: How many students do you have?

Continue until time is up.

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B. In pairs, write all the possible questions for the following answer prompt:

**ANSWER:** Students pay more attention.

## OPTIONAL

C. Do a **gallery walk** by walking to each presentation and return to your group to discuss your favorite answers.

# CREATE A CRITICAL THINKING GUIDING PRINCIPLE

“Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action...” Michael Scriven & Richard Paul (1987)

“The careful and deliberate determination of whether to accept, reject, or suspend judgment”. (Moore and Parker, 1994)

## One-Sentence Group Guiding Principle

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**Write Rob and Staci’s guiding principle here:**

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# RANKING AND CONSENSUS



Silvia

**Breakfast:** cereal with milk  
**Lunch:** green salad and fruit  
**Dinner:** spaghetti and meatballs



Augustin

**Breakfast:** coffee  
**Lunch:** sausage, beans, and rice  
**Dinner:** steak and green beans



Fernando

**Breakfast:** scrambled eggs and bacon  
**Lunch:** turkey sandwich and apple  
**Dinner:** fried chicken and baked potato



Rosa

**Breakfast:** vegetable omelette  
**Lunch:** tomato soup and bread  
**Dinner:** roasted turkey and green salad



Gilberto

**Breakfast:** doughnuts and coffee  
**Lunch:** hamburger, fries, and soda  
**Dinner:** pepperoni pizza and beer

**RANK – most to least nutritious diet**

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

# STANDARDS

## CREATE STANDARDS - ENGLISH

In groups take one skill area and make a list of standards that reflects critical thinking. One is done for you.

### Reading

1. Read for detail.

### Writing

1. Write arguments with supporting information.

### Speaking and Listening

1. Participate in a range of conversations / collaborate

# COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

## ABBREVIATED - ENGLISH

### READING

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#### Key Ideas and Details

1. Read for detail.
2. Read for main ideas.
3. Analyze why and how.

#### Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words.
5. Analyze structure.
6. Analyze how purpose affects reading.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Evaluate content from diverse formats.
8. Evaluate validity of claims.
9. Compare 2 or more text.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read increasingly complex text.

### WRITING

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#### Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments with supporting information.
2. Write well organized informative/explanatory conveying complex information.
3. Write well-structured narratives.

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Use a process of planning, revising, editing, rewriting, etc.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct research projects.
8. Gather relevant information.
9. Draw evidence to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### Range of Writing

10. Write over various time frames depending on purpose.

### SPEAKING & LISTENING

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#### Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Participate effectively in a range of conversations/collaborations.
2. Evaluate information from diverse formats.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence.
5. Use digital media and visual displays of data to express information.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

# ATTRIBUTES OF A CRITICAL THINKER

CALPRO MODULE: Critical Thinking and Metacognition Session 1

A. Study the attributes of a critical thinker below.

1. Asks pertinent questions.
2. Assesses statements and arguments.
3. Is able to admit a lack of understanding of information.
4. Has a sense of curiosity.
5. Is interested in finding new solutions.
6. Is able to clearly define a set of criteria for analyzing ideas.
7. Is willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weigh them against facts.
8. Listens carefully to others and is able to give feedback.
9. Sees that critical thinking is a lifelong process of self-assessment.
10. Suspends judgments until all facts have been gathered and considered.
11. Looks for evidence to support assumptions and beliefs.
12. Is able to adjust opinions when new facts are found.
13. Looks for proof.

B. In a group, classify items above by the number into categories.

Asking Questions	Making Judgments	Identifying Assumptions	Analyzing while suspending judgment

C. Discuss in your group how classifying helps you place value and analyze the items on the list.

# CRITICAL THINKING EASIEST TO INCORPORATE

Rank the activities by which you would do more of or least of. 1= most used.

\_\_\_\_\_ analyzing data (graphs, charts)

\_\_\_\_\_ Classifying

\_\_\_\_\_ collaborating over a problem

\_\_\_\_\_ comparing (VENN, Johari, charts)

\_\_\_\_\_ defining concepts

\_\_\_\_\_ evaluating information with a rubric

\_\_\_\_\_ individually solving problems

\_\_\_\_\_ predicting outcomes

\_\_\_\_\_ ranking

\_\_\_\_\_ reaching consensus

\_\_\_\_\_ summarizing concepts

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_ other

\_\_\_\_\_ other

\_\_\_\_\_ other

# FOOD FOR A WEEK

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
							<b>Breakfast</b>
							<b>Lunch</b>
							<b>Dinner</b>

Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Chef \_\_\_\_\_

Food Planner \_\_\_\_\_

Spokes Person \_\_\_\_\_

## CRITICAL THINKING AT LOW LEVELS

**Read a story about a teacher who tested it out.**

Hi Rob,

After attending your Critical Thinking Workshop during flex week, I have been trying to be more mindful of incorporating these strategies into my lesson planning. Since Presidents' Day is approaching, I thought that a Venn diagram comparing Washington and Lincoln would be perfect. I was talking about it in the resource room as I was preparing the materials and some of the other instructors said that it would be too difficult for my Beginning 1 students. Boy, were they wrong!

I started out by reading bios of Washington and Lincoln that I put on the overhead. The vocabulary on them was a bit too advanced for them to do on their own, so I paraphrased the info, highlighting the most important words and info I wanted them to remember, and defining vocabulary as we went along.. Then we did a group reading of a Beg. 1 level book called Presidents' Day which had a couple of pages about Washington and Lincoln that they could now better understand. And finally they completed a level appropriate handout with more info about the two presidents. Then it was time for the Venn. I modeled a Venn comparing a spoon and a bread knife from my kitchen. When I felt they were ready, they divided into groups of four and went to work. I provided large poster-size post-it paper that we stuck to the walls. They did such a great job! They worked together beautifully, helping each other with ideas and spelling. I saw them using the books we read and the handouts and their notes. It was a teacher's paradise. They were focused and involved. And *they* said that Beg. 1 students couldn't do it. Huh!

The next day we did a Gallery Walk. It was good because there were students that had not been there the day before and so they learned some new info. The task was to look at and read each groups work and using some pre-determined criteria (was it legible? understandable? good ideas? accurate?, etc.) vote for the Venn that they thought was the most successful by drawing a red star on that paper. When we all got back to our seats and announced the results, the whole classroom of students clapped for each entry--not only the winners! It was great! One of my students commented, "Teacher! You're so happy!" And she was right. I was. We finished off that evening's class with a short quiz about Washington and Lincoln on which 83% of the students were successful.

Don't tell me that Beginning 1 students can't do things. Try something. Maybe it will work, maybe it won't. But either way you will all learn something. Let's see, what's next-----Johari Squares?

Jeanne Sheehan