

CRITICAL WRITING

It is common for feedback on student writing to focus on the need to engage more critically with the source material. Typical comments from tutors are: 'too.

Describe in too much detail or include all your data – unless specifically asked to. You can use evidence to help you strengthen your position, answer readers' questions, and "neutralise" opposing points of view. It is important, however, to remember that you also need to interpret the quotes to the reader, and to explain their relevance, discuss their validity, and show how they relate to other evidence. Use it to check your own writing, or get a peer another student to help you. If you pose some of your criticisms in the form of questions and imagine a series of responses from the author and follow-up questions by you, you will find yourself moving to a deeper and more nuanced level of engagement with the texts. Then, follow up with a further rebuttal of your own "But, notwithstanding the author's response, I continue to assert that London: Sage. Rely on persuasive language alone to make your point. The writing you produce in this way will need to be 'critical writing'. Study guide For a printer-friendly PDF version of this guide, click here It is common for feedback on student writing to focus on the need to engage more critically with the source material. If you are chatting with a skeptical friend about a chapter in a book that you have read, what do you want to hold up as valuable to your reader? After summarizing an author's views, determine whether you are in sympathy with them or not. A paragraph break can provide a brief pause for your readers within a longer argument; giving them the opportunity to make sure they are keeping up with your reasoning. Within each paragraph you would: introduce the point you want to make; make the point, with supporting evidence; reflect critically on the point. I would like you to work on each of these this semester. What next? Although you need a critical voice, description is still necessary in your writing, for example to give the background of your research, to state the theory, to explain the methods of your experiment, to give the biography of an important person, or to outline the history of an event. Juxtaposed to your summary of the text should be your own reflections. A says this, B says that, C says something else, without really analysing what these writers say. If you can maintain a critical train of thought from one week to the next, by summoning in your mind an agenda of your own making through which you will read the texts, you may be able to get a greater depth in your criticism. London: Palgrave. So what? The Study Skills Handbook. Because you are one step ahead of that student, you can provide guidance. Support and illustrate your claims with appropriate evidence and examples. You should, however, keep the amount of description to a minimum. What is critical writing? There is also the trap that it can be easy to use many, many words from your word limit, simply providing description. These questions will take you through the description-analysis-evaluation stages. Because the authors are experts at sustaining a critical voice, when you latch on to one of them as a partner in conversation with another author, you will find yourself able to sustain your own voice longer than if you speak alone to an author. With critical writing you are participating in the academic debate. By analogy, most of us do not spend hours looking in a mirror: we look in a mirror to get our bearings for the day; then we go on about our business. One way to find your critical voice is to compare and contrast two or more of the authors. To write critically you need to go further and show why that theory is relevant.