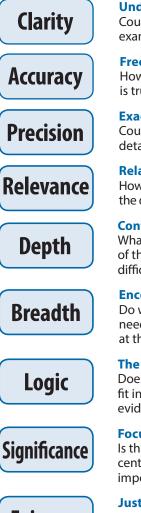
To Evaluate Thinking We Must Apply Intellectual Standards to the Elements of Thought



Understandable, the meaning can be grasped

Could you elaborate further? Could you give me an example? Could you illustrate what you mean?

Free from errors or distortions, true How could we check on that? How c ould we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?

Exact to the necessary level of detail

Could you be more specific? Could you give me more details? Could you be more exact?

Relating to the matter at hand

How does that relate to the problem? How does that bear on the guestion? How does that help us with the issue?

Containing complexities and multiple interrelationships What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the

difficulties we need to deal with?

Encompassing multiple viewpoints

Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Do we need to consider another point of view? Do we need to look at this in other ways?

The parts make sense together, no contradictions Does all this make sense together? Does your first paragraph fit in with your last? Does what you say follow from the evidence?

Focusing on the important, not trivial

Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?



Justifiable, not self-serving or one-sided

Do I have any vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others?

Excerpted from "The Thinker's Guide to Analytic Thinking", page 6-7.



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Criteria for Evaluating Reasoning

- 1. **Purpose:** What is the purpose of the reasoner? Is the purpose clearly stated or clearly implied? Is it justifiable?
- 2. **Question:** Is the question at issue well-stated? Is it clear and unbiased? Does the expression of the question do justice to the complexity of the matter at issue? Are the question and purpose directly relevant to each other?
- 3. **Information:** Does the reasoner cite relevant evidence, experiences, and/or information essential to the issue? Is the information accurate? Does the reasoner address the complexities of the issue?
- 4. **Concepts:** Does the reasoner clarify key concepts when necessary? Are the concepts used justifiably?
- 5. **Assumptions:** Does the reasoner show a sensitivity to what he or she is taking for granted or assuming? (Insofar as those assumptions might reasonably be questioned?) Does the reasoner use questionable assumptions without addressing problems which might be inherent in those assumptions?
- 6. **Inferences:** Does the reasoner develop a line of reasoning explaining well how s/he is arriving at her or his main conclusions?
- 7. **Point of View:** Does the reasoner show a sensitivity to alternative relevant points of view or lines of reasoning? Does s/he consider and respond to objections framed from other relevant points of view?
- 8. **Implications:** Does the reasoner show a sensitivity to the implications and consequences of the position s/he is taking?

Altered from "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts amd Tools", page 14.

