

Critical thinking: evidence, arguments and judgement: open practice pack

100 untimed questions across 10 authored sections.

Detail	Value
Pack	cognitive-skills-critical-thinking
Source	cognitive-skills
Pack version	v1
Worksheet items	100
Authored hints	0
Worked explanations	100

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Learner worksheet

One hundred short items in ten themed sections, starting with the difference between a claim and its evidence and building towards full argument appraisal. Judge each item only on what the prompt supplies. The aim is to reason carefully, not to race the clock or to reach for outside facts.

Choose one answer for each item. For a delayed-recall item, read its study text, cover it, and then answer without looking back.

Claims, evidence and opinion

Begin by separating what has actually been observed from what has been asserted, preferred, or inferred. Ask of each statement: could this be checked, and by what?

1. critical-thinking-s01-q01

A café owner says: "Our new blend is the best coffee in town." Which part of this statement would be hardest to settle with evidence?

- A. The judgement that the blend is the best
- B. That the café sells coffee
- C. That the blend is new
- D. That the café is located in the town

Your answer: _____

2. critical-thinking-s01-q02

Which of these statements is a factual claim that could, in principle, be checked?

- A. Autumn is the loveliest season.
- B. The library recorded 4,120 visits last month.

- C. Everyone should read more poetry.
- D. Blue is a nicer colour than green.

Your answer: _____

3. critical-thinking-s01-q03

A report states: "Sales rose after the shop repainted its front, so customers clearly prefer the new colour." Which part of this is the observation rather than the interpretation?

- A. That customers prefer the new colour
- B. That the colour caused sales to rise
- C. That sales rose after the repainting
- D. That the old colour was putting customers off

Your answer: _____

4. critical-thinking-s01-q04

A student writes: "The bus was late three times last week, and it was late again today." Which statement does this evidence support most safely?

- A. The bus service is the worst in the region.
- B. The bus will be late tomorrow.
- C. The bus is never on time.
- D. The bus has been late on several recent occasions.

Your answer: _____

5. critical-thinking-s01-q05

Which of these would count as direct evidence that a library's reading club has grown this year?

- A. Membership records showing more sign-ups than last year
- B. A member's sense that the room seems busier
- C. A poster advertising the club
- D. The librarian's hope that more people will join

Your answer: _____

6. critical-thinking-s01-q06

A newspaper headline reads: "Town's air is cleaner than ever." The article's only support is one resident saying the air "feels fresher". What is the main weakness?

- A. The resident may dislike the town
- B. The headline is too short to be informative
- C. A single personal impression is not a measurement of air quality
- D. The article does not name the newspaper

Your answer: _____

7. critical-thinking-s01-q07

Which statement mixes a factual claim with a value judgement?

- A. The council spent £2m on the new footbridge.
- B. The council wasted £2m on an unnecessary footbridge.
- C. The footbridge opened in March.
- D. The footbridge crosses the river.

Your answer: _____

8. critical-thinking-s01-q08

A shop assistant claims the new till system is faster than the old one. Which piece of information would most directly test that claim?

- A. Staff opinions about how modern the system looks
- B. The price the shop paid for the system
- C. The number of tills in the shop
- D. Recorded average time per transaction before and after the change

Your answer: _____

9. critical-thinking-s01-q09

"Nobody has proved that the water from the old well is unsafe, so it must be safe to drink." What is wrong with this reasoning?

- A. It relies too heavily on the opinion of experts
- B. It uses an outdated definition of safety
- C. An absence of proof of harm is not itself evidence of safety
- D. It assumes the well is old

Your answer: _____

10. critical-thinking-s01-q10

A gardener says: "I used the new feed and my roses bloomed beautifully, so the feed works." What extra information would most help in judging the claim?

- A. How comparable roses that went without the feed bloomed that season
- B. The price of the feed
- C. How many years the gardener has grown roses
- D. The colour of the roses

Your answer: _____

Finding the conclusion and the reasons

Every argument has one point it is trying to establish and one or more reasons offered in its support. Locate the conclusion first, then ask which sentences are working to prop it up.

11. critical-thinking-s02-q01

"The path floods every winter, and repairs cost more each year. The council should reroute it." Which part is the conclusion: the point being argued for?

- A. The path floods every winter
- B. The council should reroute the path
- C. Repairs cost more each year

- D. Winters have become wetter

Your answer: _____

12. critical-thinking-s02-q02

"Because the ferry only runs twice a day, and the crossing takes two hours, a day trip leaves little time ashore." What role does "the crossing takes two hours" play?

- A. It is the conclusion of the argument
- B. It is an irrelevant aside
- C. It contradicts the conclusion
- D. It is one of the reasons supporting the conclusion

Your answer: _____

13. critical-thinking-s02-q03

Identify the conclusion: "Membership has fallen for three years running. Our fees are higher than at every nearby club. We must lower the fees."

- A. We must lower the fees
- B. Membership has fallen for three years running
- C. Our fees are higher than at every nearby club
- D. Nearby clubs are better run

Your answer: _____

14. critical-thinking-s02-q04

"Trains are quicker than coaches on this route. They are also more expensive. On balance I will take the coach, because I have plenty of time and little money." Which statement is the conclusion?

- A. Trains are quicker than coaches on this route
- B. Trains are more expensive than coaches
- C. The speaker will take the coach
- D. The speaker has little money

Your answer: _____

15. critical-thinking-s02-q05

"The hall's roof leaks whenever it rains hard. Two concerts have been cancelled this season. Repairing the roof should be the committee's first priority." How many distinct reasons are offered for the recommendation?

- A. None
- B. Two
- C. Three
- D. Four

Your answer: _____

16. critical-thinking-s02-q06

"Every entrant must be a resident of the county, and Ravi lives two counties away, so Ravi cannot enter." Which statement, if it turned out to be false, would break the argument?

- A. Ravi lives two counties away
- B. Entrants must pay a fee
- C. The contest is popular
- D. Ravi wants to enter

Your answer: _____

17. critical-thinking-s02-q07

A speaker says: "Some say the market should move to Saturdays. I disagree. Traders report that Wednesday footfall is their best of the week." What is the speaker's conclusion?

- A. Traders would prefer to trade on Saturdays
- B. Wednesday footfall is disappointing
- C. The market should close altogether
- D. The market should not move to Saturdays

Your answer: _____

18. critical-thinking-s02-q08

"Reading before bed helps me sleep, so the school should set reading homework in the evening." Where is the weakest link between the reason and the conclusion?

- A. The claim that reading can be enjoyable
- B. The claim that the school already sets homework
- C. The leap from one person's experience to a policy for every pupil
- D. The claim that good sleep is worth having

Your answer: _____

19. critical-thinking-s02-q09

"Because the bridge is closed, deliveries take longer; and because deliveries take longer, stock runs low." What kind of structure is this?

- A. A chain, in which each conclusion becomes the reason for the next step
- B. Two unrelated observations placed side by side
- C. A single claim repeated in different words
- D. A conclusion offered with no reasons at all

Your answer: _____

20. critical-thinking-s02-q10

"The scheme is popular, well funded, and already running in three neighbouring towns. Therefore it will work here." Which of these is offered as a reason rather than as the conclusion?

- A. The scheme will work here
- B. The scheme is already running in three neighbouring towns
- C. The scheme should be adopted nationally
- D. The scheme is the only available option

Your answer: _____

Unstated assumptions

Arguments often rely on a step nobody says out loud. Look for the missing link that must hold if the stated reason is really to deliver the stated conclusion.

21. critical-thinking-s03-q01

"We should hold the fair on the green, because more people will come." Which assumption does this argument depend on?

- A. The green is owned by the council
- B. Fairs are a long-standing local tradition
- C. A larger turnout would be a good thing for the fair
- D. The weather on the day will be dry

Your answer: _____

22. critical-thinking-s03-q02

"Sunita passed the advanced course, so she can supervise the workshop." Which unstated assumption is required?

- A. Passing the advanced course qualifies someone to supervise the workshop
- B. Sunita enjoys supervising other people
- C. The workshop runs every week
- D. Other candidates failed the course

Your answer: _____

23. critical-thinking-s03-q03

"Buy the larger tin of paint. It costs less per litre." What is being assumed?

- A. The smaller tin is faulty in some way
- B. Paint is sold only in tins
- C. The larger tin holds a different colour
- D. The buyer will actually use enough paint for the extra not to be wasted

Your answer: _____

24. critical-thinking-s03-q04

"Our advert must be working: sales rose in the week it first appeared." Which assumption is doing the most work here?

- A. The advert was expensive to produce
- B. Nothing else that week could account for the rise in sales
- C. Sales figures are compiled weekly
- D. The advert was seen by at least one person

Your answer: _____

25. critical-thinking-s03-q05

"The new filter removes 99% of particles, so the water will be safe to drink." Which assumption is required?

- A. The filter is inexpensive to buy

- B. The water currently tastes unpleasant
- C. Filters of this kind are widely used
- D. The hazards in this water are the particles the filter removes

Your answer: _____

26. critical-thinking-s03-q06

"Everyone in the choir can read music, so we can rehearse from the new score straight away." What must be assumed?

- A. The choir has rehearsed together before
- B. The new score is written in a notation the members can actually read
- C. The new piece is technically difficult
- D. The choir performs in public

Your answer: _____

27. critical-thinking-s03-q07

"The clinic should extend its opening hours, because patients say they struggle to attend." Which assumption links the reason to the recommendation?

- A. The hours patients struggle with are the ones that would be added
- B. Patients answer surveys honestly
- C. The clinic has spare consulting rooms
- D. Other clinics already open for longer

Your answer: _____

28. critical-thinking-s03-q08

"This bread must be the best in the shop: it sold out first." Which assumption is required for the reasoning to hold?

- A. Bread is baked fresh each day
- B. The shop keeps accurate sales records
- C. Selling out first reflects quality rather than price or the quantity baked
- D. Customers buy bread frequently

Your answer: _____

29. critical-thinking-s03-q09

"We can cut the training budget: last year every trainee passed their assessment." What is assumed?

- A. The trainees enjoyed the training
- B. The training spending was not the reason they all passed
- C. Assessments are marked fairly
- D. The budget is currently large

Your answer: _____

30. critical-thinking-s03-q10

"A survey found that most residents want a quieter high street, so the council should ban all vehicles from it." Which assumption is the least defensible?

- A. That residents were asked their view
- B. That some residents dislike noise
- C. That vehicles currently use the high street
- D. That a total ban is what achieving a quieter street requires

Your answer: _____

Judging sources and credibility

Who is telling you something, how do they know it, and what do they stand to gain? Credibility is about relevant expertise, access, and incentive, not about confidence or volume.

31. critical-thinking-s04-q01

Four people comment on whether a footbridge is structurally sound. Whose statement carries most weight on that specific question?

- A. A resident who crosses the bridge every day
- B. A councillor who approved the bridge's budget
- C. A commuter who finds the bridge attractive
- D. An engineer who has inspected the bridge and published her measurements

Your answer: _____

32. critical-thinking-s04-q02

A company's own leaflet reports that its product outperforms every rival. Why should this be treated with caution?

- A. Leaflets are always inaccurate
- B. The company is too small to run product tests
- C. The company has a direct interest in the result and chose how to test and report it
- D. The rival firms were not consulted beforehand

Your answer: _____

33. critical-thinking-s04-q03

Which detail would most increase your confidence in a published survey result?

- A. The result matches what you already believed
- B. The report states how respondents were selected and how many replied
- C. The report presents its findings in colourful charts
- D. The survey was published very recently

Your answer: _____

34. critical-thinking-s04-q04

A witness describes a car she glimpsed at dusk from 200 metres away, six months ago. What is the main reason for caution?

- A. The viewing conditions and the delay make accurate recall difficult, whatever her honesty
- B. Witnesses in general cannot be trusted
- C. She may not own a car herself
- D. Dusk is not a precise time of day

Your answer: _____

35. critical-thinking-s04-q05

An article about a medicine cites "leading experts" but names none and links to no studies. What is the weakness?

- A. Experts rarely agree with one another
- B. Medicines are a complicated subject
- C. The claim cannot be checked because the sources are not identified
- D. The article is longer than it needs to be

Your answer: _____

36. critical-thinking-s04-q06

Two written accounts of a meeting conflict on an important point. Which would best help you decide between them?

- A. Whichever account is longer and more detailed
- B. Whichever writer sounds more confident
- C. Whichever account is written more elegantly
- D. Minutes taken at the time, or a recording made during the meeting

Your answer: _____

37. critical-thinking-s04-q07

A blogger with no legal training reviews a contract; a solicitor reviews the same contract. On the question of the contract's legal effect, what follows?

- A. The solicitor's relevant expertise makes her reading the better starting point
- B. Both readings are equally authoritative
- C. The blogger's reading is worthless in every respect
- D. Expertise makes no difference to reliability

Your answer: _____

38. critical-thinking-s04-q08

A study of a sleep aid was funded by the company that makes it. What is the appropriate response?

- A. Dismiss the study entirely
- B. Note the potential conflict and look closely at the method and at independent replications
- C. Accept it, because studies are scientific
- D. Accept it only if the company is a well-known one

Your answer: _____

39. critical-thinking-s04-q09

Which of these is a primary source about last year's rainfall in a particular town?

- A. A magazine feature reflecting on how wet the year felt
- B. A neighbour's recollection of the winter
- C. A blog post summarising a news report on the weather
- D. The local weather station's own recorded daily measurements

Your answer: _____

40. critical-thinking-s04-q10

An online reviewer praises a hotel and links to a booking site that pays her a commission on every booking. How should the review be weighed?

- A. It is certainly false
- B. It should be ignored because it appeared online
- C. It may still contain useful detail, but the incentive to be positive must be taken into account
- D. Commission arrangements have no bearing on a review

Your answer: _____

Strengthening and weakening arguments

For each argument, ask which single new fact would most change how much you believe the conclusion. The best answer usually targets the argument's key link rather than a side detail.

41. critical-thinking-s05-q01

Argument: "The new cycle lane has made the road safer. Collisions fell after it opened." Which finding would most weaken this?

- A. Traffic on the road fell by two thirds over the same period, for unrelated reasons
- B. Cyclists report that they feel safer than before
- C. The lane cost more to build than planned
- D. A neighbouring town also built a cycle lane

Your answer: _____

42. critical-thinking-s05-q02

Argument: "Pupils who eat breakfast at school do better in tests, so free school breakfasts raise attainment." Which finding would most strengthen it?

- A. Breakfast is popular with pupils
- B. Most schools already serve breakfast in some form
- C. The tests are marked by external examiners
- D. Schools that introduced free breakfasts saw attainment rise relative to closely matched schools that did not

Your answer: _____

43. critical-thinking-s05-q03

Argument: "This tonic cures colds. I took it and recovered within a week." Which fact most weakens the claim?

- A. The tonic has an unpleasant taste
- B. The tonic is sold in many shops
- C. Untreated colds typically clear up in about a week anyway
- D. The speaker rarely catches colds

Your answer: _____

44. critical-thinking-s05-q04

Argument: "Our helpline must be excellent: 95% of people who filled in the feedback form rated it highly." Which finding would most weaken this?

- A. The feedback form was available online
- B. Only 3% of callers completed the form, and dissatisfied callers rarely bother to do so
- C. The helpline is open at weekends
- D. The rating scale ran from one to five

Your answer: _____

45. critical-thinking-s05-q05

Argument: "Wearing high-visibility clothing reduces night-time accidents among runners." Which finding would most strengthen it?

- A. A trial that randomly assigned runners high-visibility or ordinary kit found fewer incidents in the high-visibility group
- B. High-visibility clothing is inexpensive
- C. Many runners already choose to wear it
- D. Drivers say bright colours catch the eye

Your answer: _____

46. critical-thinking-s05-q06

Argument: "The library should close on Mondays, because Monday has the fewest visitors." Which finding would most weaken this?

- A. Mondays are quiet in most public buildings
- B. Monday visitors are largely people whose circumstances prevent them attending on any other day
- C. The library currently opens six days a week
- D. Staff would prefer a different day off

Your answer: _____

47. critical-thinking-s05-q07

Argument: "Since the parking ban, high-street takings have dropped, so the ban is hurting shops." Which finding would most weaken it?

- A. Shopkeepers dislike the ban
- B. The ban was introduced at short notice

- C. Some shoppers arrive by bus
- D. Takings fell by a similar amount in nearby towns that introduced no ban at all

Your answer: _____

48. critical-thinking-s05-q08

Argument: "Our training works. Trainees scored higher at the end of the course than at the start." Which finding would most strengthen the claim that the training caused the gain?

- A. Trainees enjoyed the sessions
- B. The final test was harder than the first
- C. A comparable group who did not train showed no gain over the same period
- D. The trainer is highly experienced

Your answer: _____

49. critical-thinking-s05-q09

Argument: "Nobody complained about the new timetable, so passengers are happy with it." Which finding would most weaken it?

- A. Timetables are revised every year
- B. The complaints form was removed from the website when the timetable changed
- C. The timetable is printed clearly at every stop
- D. Some passengers travel on the route daily

Your answer: _____

50. critical-thinking-s05-q10

Argument: "Villages with more trees have lower summer temperatures, so planting trees cools a village." Which further finding would most strengthen the causal claim?

- A. Villages that planted trees recorded falling summer temperatures afterwards, while similar villages that planted none showed no change
- B. Tree-lined streets are widely considered attractive
- C. Trees provide habitat for birds and insects
- D. Tree planting is popular with residents

Your answer: _____

Alternative explanations and cause

Before accepting that one thing caused another, canvass the rivals: a shared third factor, the influence running the other way, a change in how things are counted, or chance.

51. critical-thinking-s06-q01

Ice-cream sales and swimming-pool attendance rise and fall together across the year. What is the most likely explanation?

- A. Eating ice cream makes people want to swim
- B. Warm weather independently raises both
- C. Swimming makes people crave ice cream
- D. The pattern is a coincidence with no explanation at all

Your answer: _____

52. critical-thinking-s06-q02

A school reports that pupils who take private music lessons achieve higher marks. Which alternative explanation should be considered first?

- A. Families able to afford lessons may also provide other advantages that raise marks
- B. Music lessons are enjoyable
- C. Marks are recorded once a term
- D. Music teachers tend to be strict

Your answer: _____

53. critical-thinking-s06-q03

A hospital finds that patients treated in its newest ward recover faster than those elsewhere. What is a plausible alternative to "the ward heals people faster"?

- A. New buildings feel cheerful
- B. Nurses prefer working in new wards
- C. Recovery is difficult to measure precisely
- D. Less serious cases may be the ones assigned to that ward

Your answer: _____

54. critical-thinking-s06-q04

After a town installed street lighting on a footpath, recorded crime on that path rose. Which alternative explanation most deserves testing?

- A. Lighting causes crime
- B. Crime figures are meaningless
- C. Better lighting may have increased the reporting of incidents that were already occurring
- D. Offenders prefer brightly lit places

Your answer: _____

55. critical-thinking-s06-q05

A shop owner notices that takings are highest on the days she wears her lucky scarf. What is the most reasonable next step?

- A. Wear the scarf every day
- B. Conclude that the scarf raises takings
- C. Conclude that customers notice the scarf
- D. Check whether those days share something else, such as market days or pay days

Your answer: _____

56. critical-thinking-s06-q06

A study finds that people who take long holidays live longer than those who do not. Before accepting that holidays extend life, what should be considered?

- A. Whether holidays are enjoyable

- B. Whether the study appeared in print
- C. Whether healthier and wealthier people are both more able to take long holidays and more likely to live longer
- D. Whether holidays are becoming shorter over time

Your answer: _____

57. critical-thinking-s06-q07

A gardener's tomatoes did much better this year after she switched compost. Which factor most needs ruling out before the compost is credited?

- A. The weather differed from last year's
- B. The tomatoes were a familiar variety
- C. Compost is sold in bags
- D. She has gardened for many years

Your answer: _____

58. critical-thinking-s06-q08

Which of these best describes reverse causation?

- A. Two things rise together because of a third factor
- B. The supposed effect is in fact the cause
- C. A result appears purely by chance
- D. A sample fails to represent the wider group

Your answer: _____

59. critical-thinking-s06-q09

Runners who stretch before exercise report fewer injuries. A sceptic suspects reverse causation. What would that look like in this case?

- A. Stretching prevents injuries
- B. A third factor causes both stretching and low injury rates
- C. Runners who are already free of injury find stretching comfortable and so do more of it
- D. Injuries are recorded inaccurately

Your answer: _____

60. critical-thinking-s06-q10

A region's recorded cases of a condition doubled in the year a new screening programme began. What is the most cautious interpretation?

- A. The condition has become twice as common
- B. Screening causes the condition
- C. The earlier figures must have been falsified
- D. More cases are being detected, so the true change in occurrence is not yet clear

Your answer: _____

Samples, statistics and generalisation

Numbers persuade quickly, so slow down over them. Ask who was counted, how many, against what comparison, and whether the figure describes the group the conclusion is about.

61. critical-thinking-s07-q01

A sailing magazine surveys its own readers and reports that 80% of people enjoy sailing. What is the main problem?

- A. 80% is too round a figure to be credible
- B. The survey was carried out too recently
- C. Readers of a sailing magazine are not representative of people in general
- D. Enjoyment cannot be measured by a survey

Your answer: _____

62. critical-thinking-s07-q02

A report states that a town's average household income is £46,000, while the most common household income is £24,000. What does this suggest?

- A. One of the two figures must be wrong
- B. A small number of very high incomes are pulling the average up
- C. Most households earn about £46,000
- D. Incomes are spread evenly across the town

Your answer: _____

63. critical-thinking-s07-q03

A trial of a new tutoring method involved eight pupils, all of whom improved. What is the appropriate conclusion?

- A. The result is worth following up, but too few pupils were involved to generalise confidently
- B. The method works for all pupils
- C. The method does not work
- D. Sample size makes no difference to what can be concluded

Your answer: _____

64. critical-thinking-s07-q04

"Crime doubled in our village last year." Which piece of information matters most before reacting?

- A. The name of the village
- B. Who published the figure
- C. Whether other villages were mentioned in the same report
- D. The underlying counts: two incidents becoming four is not the same as 200 becoming 400

Your answer: _____

65. critical-thinking-s07-q05

A poll conducted by telephone between 10am and 4pm on weekdays asks who will win the local election. Which limitation matters most?

- A. Telephone polling is an old-fashioned method
- B. People reachable by phone during working hours differ from the electorate as a whole
- C. Elections are inherently unpredictable
- D. The poll should have asked about policies instead

Your answer: _____

66. critical-thinking-s07-q06

A drink is advertised as containing "30% less sugar". What must you know to judge the claim?

- A. The flavour of the drink
- B. The size of the bottle and nothing else
- C. Whether the drink is sold in supermarkets
- D. Less sugar than what: the comparison point

Your answer: _____

67. critical-thinking-s07-q07

An advertisement says that nine out of ten dentists surveyed recommended a toothpaste. Which question would sharpen your reading of this?

- A. How long dentists spend in training
- B. Which flavour of the toothpaste was tested
- C. How many dentists were approached, and how they were selected
- D. Whether toothpaste is necessary at all

Your answer: _____

68. critical-thinking-s07-q08

A charity reports that donations rose 200% after a campaign. Which fact would most change how impressive this sounds?

- A. Donations rose from £50 to £150
- B. The campaign ran for a month
- C. The charity has many long-standing supporters
- D. Donations are counted monthly

Your answer: _____

69. critical-thinking-s07-q09

A study reports that a treatment halves the risk of a rare complication. Why is the absolute risk also needed?

- A. Halving cannot be measured reliably
- B. Percentages are inherently unreliable
- C. Rare events cannot be studied at all
- D. Halving a risk of 2 in 10,000 is a far smaller real change than halving a risk of 2 in 10

Your answer: _____

70. critical-thinking-s07-q10

A researcher tests twenty different food additives for a link with headaches and finds one significant result. What should be borne in mind?

- A. The other nineteen tests were a waste of effort
- B. Testing many possibilities makes at least one chance finding likely, so the result needs independent confirmation
- C. The finding proves that additive causes headaches
- D. Headaches are not a suitable subject for study

Your answer: _____

Common reasoning flaws

These items name the recurring ways arguments go wrong. Focus on identifying what the reasoning does, not on memorising labels. The description is what matters.

71. critical-thinking-s08-q01

"Either we cut the bus service or the council goes bankrupt." What is the flaw in this reasoning?

- A. It appeals to the audience's emotions
- B. It attacks the person rather than the argument
- C. It relies on an anonymous source
- D. It presents only two options when others may exist

Your answer: _____

72. critical-thinking-s08-q02

"You cannot trust her argument about the housing plan. She has never owned a house." What is the flaw?

- A. It targets the person rather than what she actually argued
- B. It generalises from a very small sample
- C. It confuses correlation with cause
- D. It appeals to long-standing tradition

Your answer: _____

73. critical-thinking-s08-q03

"We have always held the village fête in June, so June is the right month for it." Which flaw is this?

- A. A false choice between two options
- B. An appeal to tradition: long practice is treated as a justification on its own
- C. Circular reasoning
- D. A hasty generalisation from few cases

Your answer: _____

74. critical-thinking-s08-q04

"My opponent wants to review the parking rules, which means she wants to abolish parking altogether." What has happened here?

- A. A credible source has been dismissed without reason

- B. A statistic has been misread
- C. The opponent's position has been exaggerated into a more extreme one that is easier to attack
- D. Two separate events have been confused

Your answer: _____

75. critical-thinking-s08-q05

"The manual is reliable, because it says on its first page that it is reliable." What is the flaw?

- A. The claim is used as its own support
- B. The manual is out of date
- C. The author of the manual is unknown
- D. The evidence offered is anecdotal

Your answer: _____

76. critical-thinking-s08-q06

"If we let pupils choose one lesson a term, before long they will choose to do nothing at all." What is the weakness?

- A. It relies on an unnamed expert
- B. It reverses cause and effect
- C. It asserts a chain of consequences without showing that each step follows
- D. It appeals to the audience's pity

Your answer: _____

77. critical-thinking-s08-q07

"Three of my neighbours dislike the new bins, so the whole town dislikes them." Which flaw is this?

- A. Circular reasoning
- B. Generalising from a small and unrepresentative sample
- C. A false choice between two options
- D. Attacking the person rather than the argument

Your answer: _____

78. critical-thinking-s08-q08

"Everyone in the office is using the new app, so it must be the best one available." What is the flaw?

- A. It ignores the price of the app
- B. It uses an outdated comparison
- C. It reverses cause and effect
- D. Popularity is treated as proof of quality

Your answer: _____

79. critical-thinking-s08-q09

"Think of the families who will suffer if this proposal fails. That is why the figures against it must be wrong." What has gone wrong?

- A. Feeling about the outcome is being used in place of evidence about the figures
- B. A sample has been chosen badly
- C. A key word has quietly changed meaning
- D. An authority has been cited without being named

Your answer: _____

80. critical-thinking-s08-q10

A debate opens with "free access for all" meaning no entry fee, but the same speaker later uses the phrase to mean unrestricted opening hours. What is the flaw?

- A. The speaker generalises hastily from few cases
- B. The speaker appeals to an authority
- C. A key term shifts meaning mid-argument, so the conclusion no longer follows from the premises
- D. The speaker offers only two possible options

Your answer: _____

Weighing conflicting evidence

Real decisions rarely arrive with tidy evidence. These items ask how to handle disagreement, gaps, and uncertainty without either freezing or pretending to certainty you do not have.

81. critical-thinking-s09-q01

Two rain gauges standing in the same field record 12 mm and 31 mm for the same night. What is the most reasonable first step?

- A. Check both gauges for faults or obstruction before treating either figure as correct
- B. Average the two figures and move on
- C. Accept the higher figure as the safer estimate
- D. Discard both and record no reading

Your answer: _____

82. critical-thinking-s09-q02

A supplier's report says a component fails once in 10,000 uses, but your own workshop has recorded three failures in 500 uses. What is the best response?

- A. Assume the supplier is being dishonest
- B. Assume the workshop is handling the component carelessly
- C. Treat the gap as a question to investigate. Conditions of use, batch, and how each figure was gathered
- D. Average the two failure rates

Your answer: _____

83. critical-thinking-s09-q03

Two apparently well-conducted studies reach opposite conclusions about a diet. What is the most reasonable position?

- A. Adopt whichever conclusion fits your existing habits
- B. Withhold a firm conclusion and examine how the studies differ in population, dose, and duration
- C. Conclude that research on diet is worthless

- D. Accept the more recent study automatically

Your answer: _____

84. critical-thinking-s09-q04

You must decide today, and some relevant information will not arrive in time. Which approach shows the best judgement?

- A. Wait indefinitely until certainty is available
- B. Choose at random, to avoid being biased
- C. Proceed as though the missing information does not matter
- D. Choose the option that performs acceptably across the range of things the missing information might turn out to be

Your answer: _____

85. critical-thinking-s09-q05

A colleague presents only the evidence that supports her preferred option. What should you ask for?

- A. A shorter summary
- B. A different presenter
- C. The evidence that tells against the option, and how she weighed it
- D. An immediate vote

Your answer: _____

86. critical-thinking-s09-q06

A committee has strong evidence about a proposal's cost and only weak evidence about its safety. How should the weak evidence be treated?

- A. Ignored, since it is weak
- B. Reported as weak, with the uncertainty carried into the decision rather than hidden
- C. Given the same weight as the cost evidence
- D. Replaced by the committee's own opinion

Your answer: _____

87. critical-thinking-s09-q07

Which development would most justify revising a conclusion you reached last year?

- A. Colleagues expressing disagreement with it
- B. The conclusion becoming unpopular
- C. The simple passage of time
- D. New evidence that the earlier reasoning did not and could not have taken into account

Your answer: _____

88. critical-thinking-s09-q08

You notice that every source you have read on a question agrees with your existing view. What is the most useful corrective?

- A. Seek out the strongest case against your view and see whether it survives scrutiny
- B. Read further sources that agree, to be certain
- C. Stop reading and decide
- D. Assume your view must be wrong

Your answer: _____

89. critical-thinking-s09-q09

Two witnesses agree on an unusual detail but disagree about the order in which events occurred. What does this pattern suggest?

- A. Both accounts should be treated as worthless
- B. The shared unusual detail carries more weight than the disputed order, since memory for sequence is especially fragile
- C. One of the witnesses must be lying
- D. The order is more reliable than the shared detail

Your answer: _____

90. critical-thinking-s09-q10

A proposal is supported by one large, well-designed study and opposed by three vivid personal stories. How should these be weighed?

- A. The study carries more weight on the general question, though the stories may point to effects worth examining
- B. The stories outweigh the study because they are concrete
- C. Both kinds of evidence count equally
- D. Neither should influence the decision

Your answer: _____

Appraising a whole argument

The hardest section brings the earlier skills together. For each argument, judge whether the reasons are true, whether they genuinely support the conclusion, and what has been left out.

91. critical-thinking-s10-q01

"Our online course must be effective: 92% of those who completed it passed the final exam." Which question most undermines the claim as stated?

- A. How many weeks the course lasts
- B. What proportion of those who started the course completed it
- C. Whether the exam is marked online
- D. Who designed the course

Your answer: _____

92. critical-thinking-s10-q02

"The town's recycling scheme is failing: the tonnage collected has fallen for two years running." Which additional fact would most change this assessment?

- A. The collection lorries are newly purchased

- B. Neighbouring towns collect a greater tonnage
- C. Residents were surveyed about the scheme last year
- D. Households now buy far less packaging, so there is less recyclable material in existence

Your answer: _____

93. critical-thinking-s10-q03

"A survey of our members found 70% support for longer opening hours, so the public wants them." What is the strongest objection?

- A. 70% is not a large enough majority to act on
- B. Surveys are generally unreliable
- C. Members are not the public, so the conclusion reaches beyond the evidence
- D. Opening hours are a matter for staff rather than the public

Your answer: _____

94. critical-thinking-s10-q04

"Since the tax on sugary drinks began, sales of those drinks have fallen 12%, so the tax is improving the nation's diet." Which step in this reasoning is least secure?

- A. The move from lower sales of one product to a broad improvement in diet
- B. The claim that a tax was introduced
- C. The claim that sales figures are recorded
- D. The claim that sugary drinks are sold

Your answer: _____

95. critical-thinking-s10-q05

"Every complaint we received last month was resolved within a day, so our service is excellent." Which combination of facts would most damage this conclusion?

- A. The complaints covered a wide range of issues
- B. The manager praised the team's performance
- C. Resolution times are logged automatically
- D. Most dissatisfied customers left without complaining, and "resolved" means only that the case was closed

Your answer: _____

96. critical-thinking-s10-q06

"Village A's school gets better exam results than Village B's, so Village A's school teaches better." Which evidence would most help settle this?

- A. Pupils' attainment on entry at both schools, so progress rather than final results can be compared
- B. The age of the two school buildings
- C. The population of each village
- D. The results each school achieved ten years ago

Your answer: _____

97. critical-thinking-s10-q07

An argument runs: "The scheme saves money; saving money is good; therefore the scheme should be adopted." What is the most important gap?

- A. It never states a conclusion
- B. It relies on an anonymous source
- C. It ignores whether the scheme carries costs other than money that might outweigh the saving
- D. It confuses correlation with cause

Your answer: _____

98. critical-thinking-s10-q08

A report concludes that a medicine is safe, on the basis of a six-week trial in healthy adults aged 20 to 30. What is the most precise objection?

- A. Six weeks is an unusually long trial
- B. The conclusion is broader than the evidence, which says nothing about other ages, longer use, or people who are unwell
- C. Medicines cannot be tested safely at all
- D. Healthy adults should never take part in trials

Your answer: _____

99. critical-thinking-s10-q09

"The consultation received 400 responses, 300 of them opposing the plan. The plan clearly lacks public support." What is the key weakness?

- A. 400 responses is too few to count at all
- B. Opponents of plans are usually mistaken
- C. People who feel strongly are far likelier to respond, so the responses need not mirror the wider public
- D. The consultation should have run for longer

Your answer: _____

100. critical-thinking-s10-q10

Which of these best summarises a careful appraisal of an argument?

- A. Decide whether you agree with the conclusion, then judge the reasons accordingly
- B. Count the reasons offered and accept the argument if there are several
- C. Accept the argument if the person making it is well qualified
- D. Check whether the reasons are true, whether they support the conclusion, and what the argument leaves out

Your answer: _____

Authored hints

This cognitive practice source does not publish authored hints. Every item is listed as missing a hint, and no hint text is generated or inferred.

100 worksheet items do not have an authored hint. No hint text was generated for them.

Answer key

The answer key and worked explanations in this file belong only to this public, untimed educational practice source. No active aptitude suite or Novus Reasoning Challenge answer key is ever included in any download.

Critical thinking: evidence, arguments and judgement: open practice pack answer key

Item	Choice	Answer
critical-thinking-s01-q01	A	The judgement that the blend is the best
critical-thinking-s01-q02	B	The library recorded 4,120 visits last month.
critical-thinking-s01-q03	C	That sales rose after the repainting
critical-thinking-s01-q04	D	The bus has been late on several recent occasions.
critical-thinking-s01-q05	A	Membership records showing more sign-ups than last year
critical-thinking-s01-q06	C	A single personal impression is not a measurement of air quality
critical-thinking-s01-q07	B	The council wasted £2m on an unnecessary footbridge.
critical-thinking-s01-q08	D	Recorded average time per transaction before and after the change
critical-thinking-s01-q09	C	An absence of proof of harm is not itself evidence of safety
critical-thinking-s01-q10	A	How comparable roses that went without the feed bloomed that season
critical-thinking-s02-q01	B	The council should reroute the path
critical-thinking-s02-q02	D	It is one of the reasons supporting the conclusion
critical-thinking-s02-q03	A	We must lower the fees
critical-thinking-s02-q04	C	The speaker will take the coach
critical-thinking-s02-q05	B	Two
critical-thinking-s02-q06	A	Ravi lives two counties away
critical-thinking-s02-q07	D	The market should not move to Saturdays
critical-thinking-s02-q08	C	The leap from one person's experience to a policy for every pupil
critical-thinking-s02-q09	A	A chain, in which each conclusion becomes the reason for the next step
critical-thinking-s02-q10	B	The scheme is already running in three neighbouring towns
critical-thinking-s03-q01	C	A larger turnout would be a good thing for the fair
critical-thinking-s03-q02	A	Passing the advanced course qualifies someone to supervise the workshop
critical-thinking-s03-q03	D	The buyer will actually use enough paint for the extra not to be wasted
critical-thinking-s03-q04	B	Nothing else that week could account for the rise in sales
critical-thinking-s03-q05	D	The hazards in this water are the particles the filter removes
critical-thinking-s03-q06	B	The new score is written in a notation the members can actually read
critical-thinking-s03-q07	A	The hours patients struggle with are the ones that would be added
critical-thinking-s03-q08	C	Selling out first reflects quality rather than price or the quantity baked
critical-thinking-s03-q09	B	The training spending was not the reason they all passed
critical-thinking-s03-q10	D	That a total ban is what achieving a quieter street requires
critical-thinking-s04-q01	D	An engineer who has inspected the bridge and published her measurements
critical-thinking-s04-q02	C	The company has a direct interest in the result and chose how to test and report it

critical-thinking-s04-q03	B	The report states how respondents were selected and how many replied
critical-thinking-s04-q04	A	The viewing conditions and the delay make accurate recall difficult, whatever her honesty
critical-thinking-s04-q05	C	The claim cannot be checked because the sources are not identified
critical-thinking-s04-q06	D	Minutes taken at the time, or a recording made during the meeting
critical-thinking-s04-q07	A	The solicitor's relevant expertise makes her reading the better starting point
critical-thinking-s04-q08	B	Note the potential conflict and look closely at the method and at independent replications
critical-thinking-s04-q09	D	The local weather station's own recorded daily measurements
critical-thinking-s04-q10	C	It may still contain useful detail, but the incentive to be positive must be taken into account
critical-thinking-s05-q01	A	Traffic on the road fell by two thirds over the same period, for unrelated reasons
critical-thinking-s05-q02	D	Schools that introduced free breakfasts saw attainment rise relative to closely matched schools that did not
critical-thinking-s05-q03	C	Untreated colds typically clear up in about a week anyway
critical-thinking-s05-q04	B	Only 3% of callers completed the form, and dissatisfied callers rarely bother to do so
critical-thinking-s05-q05	A	A trial that randomly assigned runners high-visibility or ordinary kit found fewer incidents in the high-visibility group
critical-thinking-s05-q06	B	Monday visitors are largely people whose circumstances prevent them attending on any other day
critical-thinking-s05-q07	D	Takings fell by a similar amount in nearby towns that introduced no ban at all
critical-thinking-s05-q08	C	A comparable group who did not train showed no gain over the same period
critical-thinking-s05-q09	B	The complaints form was removed from the website when the timetable changed
critical-thinking-s05-q10	A	Villages that planted trees recorded falling summer temperatures afterwards, while similar villages that planted none showed no change
critical-thinking-s06-q01	B	Warm weather independently raises both
critical-thinking-s06-q02	A	Families able to afford lessons may also provide other advantages that raise marks
critical-thinking-s06-q03	D	Less serious cases may be the ones assigned to that ward
critical-thinking-s06-q04	C	Better lighting may have increased the reporting of incidents that were already occurring
critical-thinking-s06-q05	D	Check whether those days share something else, such as market days or pay days
critical-thinking-s06-q06	C	Whether healthier and wealthier people are both more able to take long holidays and more likely to live longer
critical-thinking-s06-q07	A	The weather differed from last year's
critical-thinking-s06-q08	B	The supposed effect is in fact the cause
critical-thinking-s06-q09	C	Runners who are already free of injury find stretching comfortable and so do more of it

critical-thinking-s06-q10	D	More cases are being detected, so the true change in occurrence is not yet clear
critical-thinking-s07-q01	C	Readers of a sailing magazine are not representative of people in general
critical-thinking-s07-q02	B	A small number of very high incomes are pulling the average up
critical-thinking-s07-q03	A	The result is worth following up, but too few pupils were involved to generalise confidently
critical-thinking-s07-q04	D	The underlying counts: two incidents becoming four is not the same as 200 becoming 400
critical-thinking-s07-q05	B	People reachable by phone during working hours differ from the electorate as a whole
critical-thinking-s07-q06	D	Less sugar than what: the comparison point
critical-thinking-s07-q07	C	How many dentists were approached, and how they were selected
critical-thinking-s07-q08	A	Donations rose from £50 to £150
critical-thinking-s07-q09	D	Halving a risk of 2 in 10,000 is a far smaller real change than halving a risk of 2 in 10
critical-thinking-s07-q10	B	Testing many possibilities makes at least one chance finding likely, so the result needs independent confirmation
critical-thinking-s08-q01	D	It presents only two options when others may exist
critical-thinking-s08-q02	A	It targets the person rather than what she actually argued
critical-thinking-s08-q03	B	An appeal to tradition: long practice is treated as a justification on its own
critical-thinking-s08-q04	C	The opponent's position has been exaggerated into a more extreme one that is easier to attack
critical-thinking-s08-q05	A	The claim is used as its own support
critical-thinking-s08-q06	C	It asserts a chain of consequences without showing that each step follows
critical-thinking-s08-q07	B	Generalising from a small and unrepresentative sample
critical-thinking-s08-q08	D	Popularity is treated as proof of quality
critical-thinking-s08-q09	A	Feeling about the outcome is being used in place of evidence about the figures
critical-thinking-s08-q10	C	A key term shifts meaning mid-argument, so the conclusion no longer follows from the premises
critical-thinking-s09-q01	A	Check both gauges for faults or obstruction before treating either figure as correct
critical-thinking-s09-q02	C	Treat the gap as a question to investigate. Conditions of use, batch, and how each figure was gathered
critical-thinking-s09-q03	B	Withhold a firm conclusion and examine how the studies differ in population, dose, and duration
critical-thinking-s09-q04	D	Choose the option that performs acceptably across the range of things the missing information might turn out to be
critical-thinking-s09-q05	C	The evidence that tells against the option, and how she weighed it
critical-thinking-s09-q06	B	Reported as weak, with the uncertainty carried into the decision rather than hidden
critical-thinking-s09-q07	D	New evidence that the earlier reasoning did not and could not have taken into account

critical-thinking-s09-q08	A	Seek out the strongest case against your view and see whether it survives scrutiny
critical-thinking-s09-q09	B	The shared unusual detail carries more weight than the disputed order, since memory for sequence is especially fragile
critical-thinking-s09-q10	A	The study carries more weight on the general question, though the stories may point to effects worth examining
critical-thinking-s10-q01	B	What proportion of those who started the course completed it
critical-thinking-s10-q02	D	Households now buy far less packaging, so there is less recyclable material in existence
critical-thinking-s10-q03	C	Members are not the public, so the conclusion reaches beyond the evidence
critical-thinking-s10-q04	A	The move from lower sales of one product to a broad improvement in diet
critical-thinking-s10-q05	D	Most dissatisfied customers left without complaining, and "resolved" means only that the case was closed
critical-thinking-s10-q06	A	Pupils' attainment on entry at both schools, so progress rather than final results can be compared
critical-thinking-s10-q07	C	It ignores whether the scheme carries costs other than money that might outweigh the saving
critical-thinking-s10-q08	B	The conclusion is broader than the evidence, which says nothing about other ages, longer use, or people who are unwell
critical-thinking-s10-q09	C	People who feel strongly are far likelier to respond, so the responses need not mirror the wider public
critical-thinking-s10-q10	D	Check whether the reasons are true, whether they support the conclusion, and what the argument leaves out

Worked explanations

critical-thinking-s01-q01: Split a statement into its testable parts and its evaluative parts. Whether coffee is sold, whether a blend is new, and where a café stands can all be checked; ranking taste as the best depends on a standard nobody has agreed.

critical-thinking-s01-q02: A factual claim points at something that could be counted, measured, or recorded, so a check could confirm or refute it. Preferences and recommendations describe how the speaker feels or what they want, and no measurement settles them.

critical-thinking-s01-q03: The observation is the bare recorded fact: a rise that followed a repainting. Everything about preference and cause is a layer the writer has added on top, and each added layer needs its own support.

critical-thinking-s01-q04: Match the size of the conclusion to the size of the evidence. Four recorded late arrivals support a modest statement about recent occasions, but not a regional comparison, a prediction, or a claim about every journey.

critical-thinking-s01-q05: Direct evidence measures the very thing in question: here, how many people have joined. Impressions, advertising, and hopes are all consistent with growth, decline, or no change at all.

critical-thinking-s01-q06: Ask whether the evidence offered is of the right kind for the claim made. A sweeping claim about air quality over time needs recorded readings; how the air feels to one person cannot establish it, however sincere they are.

critical-thinking-s01-q07: Watch for loaded words that smuggle a verdict into what looks like a report. Calling the spending wasted and the bridge unnecessary asserts a judgement alongside the checkable figure, and

the judgement needs arguing for separately.

critical-thinking-s01-q08: Turn a claim into a measurement before judging it. Speed is time per transaction, so the useful evidence is that timing recorded on both sides of the change; cost, appearance, and till count measure something else.

critical-thinking-s01-q09: Not knowing of a problem and knowing there is no problem are different states. If nobody has tested the well, the silence in the record reflects the missing test rather than the water's quality.

critical-thinking-s01-q10: A single good outcome cannot tell you what would have happened otherwise. The missing piece is a comparison: roses of the same kind, in the same season, without the feed.

critical-thinking-s02-q01: The conclusion is the claim the other sentences are there to support. Flooding and rising repair costs are the evidence; the recommendation about rerouting is what they are meant to establish.

critical-thinking-s02-q02: Test each sentence by asking whether it supports the main point or is supported by it. The crossing time is one of two facts feeding the claim about time ashore, so it functions as a reason.

critical-thinking-s02-q03: Try inserting "therefore" in front of each candidate and see which reads naturally. Falling membership and higher fees are the observations; the call to lower fees is what they are marshalled to justify.

critical-thinking-s02-q04: A conclusion can arrive in the middle of a passage rather than at the end. Here the speed, price, time, and money statements all feed a single decision, and that decision is the point being argued for.

critical-thinking-s02-q05: Count the separate supporting claims, not the sentences overall. The leak and the cancellations are two independent pieces of support, while the third sentence is the recommendation they support.

critical-thinking-s02-q06: An argument stands on the truth of its reasons, so test each one by imagining it false. If Ravi turns out to live in the county, the residence rule no longer excludes him and the conclusion collapses.

critical-thinking-s02-q07: When a speaker opens by reporting a rival view, that view is not their conclusion. "I disagree" signals that the speaker's own position is the denial of it, and the footfall figure is the reason offered.

critical-thinking-s02-q08: A reason can be perfectly true and still fail to carry the conclusion. The gap here is one of scope: what works for a single speaker is not yet a case for a rule that binds a whole school.

critical-thinking-s02-q09: Mapping the links shows the shape: closure supports slower deliveries, and slower deliveries in turn support low stock. Chains are only as strong as their weakest link, so each step needs checking on its own.

critical-thinking-s02-q10: The word "therefore" marks what follows as the conclusion, so everything before it is doing supporting work. Claims that appear nowhere in the passage cannot be either its reasons or its conclusion.

critical-thinking-s03-q01: Ask what has to be true for the reason to count in favour of the conclusion. Higher attendance is only an argument for the green if more attendance is desirable, which the speaker takes for granted rather than states.

critical-thinking-s03-q02: The reason and the conclusion mention different things, a course result and a supervisory role, so something must bridge them. The bridge is the unstated claim that the course result is what confers the role.

critical-thinking-s03-q03: A better unit price only means better value if the whole quantity gets used. Left-over paint converts the apparent saving into a real loss, so the argument quietly assumes the surplus will be needed.

critical-thinking-s03-q04: Whenever one event is credited for another, the hidden premise is that no rival cause was at work. Naming that assumption immediately suggests the check. Look for pay days, weather,

holidays, or a competitor's closure.

critical-thinking-s03-q05: Notice when a conclusion uses a broader term than the evidence: here, safety versus particles. Dissolved chemicals and bacteria are not particles, so the argument assumes the filtered fraction is the whole risk.

critical-thinking-s03-q06: Check that a general ability really covers the specific case. A choir fluent in standard staff notation may be stopped by tonic sol-fa or an unfamiliar system, so the argument assumes the two match.

critical-thinking-s03-q07: A remedy only follows from a problem if it addresses that particular problem. If the difficulty is early mornings and the extension is late evenings, the reason no longer supports the proposal.

critical-thinking-s03-q08: Ask what the evidence measures before accepting what it is said to show. Selling out is a fact about supply, price, and demand together, so treating it as a quality ranking is an extra step.

critical-thinking-s03-q09: Success after an intervention is sometimes success because of it. Using a perfect pass rate as a reason to cut the training assumes the spending was not what produced that rate.

critical-thinking-s03-q10: Weigh assumptions by how much they add beyond the evidence. Wanting less noise is a long way from wanting every vehicle removed, so the jump to the most extreme remedy is the step carrying the least support.

critical-thinking-s04-q01: Credibility is question-specific: ask who has both the relevant training and first-hand access to the evidence. Daily use, budget approval, and aesthetic opinion say nothing about load-bearing capacity.

critical-thinking-s04-q02: Caution comes from incentive combined with control: the same party benefits from the answer and decides the method. That does not make the claim false, but it does mean the method deserves close inspection.

critical-thinking-s04-q03: Transparency about method is what lets a reader judge a survey rather than simply trust it. Selection and response rate decide who the numbers actually describe; agreement with your own view is no evidence at all.

critical-thinking-s04-q04: Separate honesty from accuracy: a sincere witness can still be mistaken. Poor light, distance, and a long interval all degrade what memory can deliver, so the account needs corroboration rather than suspicion.

critical-thinking-s04-q05: An appeal to unnamed authority gives a reader nothing to verify. Naming the experts or citing the studies would turn an assertion into something that could be followed up and tested.

critical-thinking-s04-q06: Prefer a record made at the time over a recollection formed afterwards, because contemporaneous evidence is not shaped by later events. Length, confidence, and style are features of the telling, not of the accuracy.

critical-thinking-s04-q07: Expertise raises the prior likelihood that a reading is correct within its own field, without settling the matter outright. Treating it as a stronger starting point avoids both blind deference and pretending all opinions weigh the same.

critical-thinking-s04-q08: Funding is a reason to scrutinise, not a verdict on the findings. The useful moves are to examine the design for choices that favour the sponsor and to see whether independent groups reach the same result.

critical-thinking-s04-q09: A primary source is the original record, made at the time by whoever observed the thing directly. Features, recollections, and summaries all sit at one or more removes, and each remove is a chance for detail to shift.

critical-thinking-s04-q10: An incentive to praise shifts how much weight the overall verdict deserves without erasing the concrete details. Specific, checkable observations survive better than the recommendation itself.

critical-thinking-s05-q01: To weaken a causal claim, supply a rival explanation for the same observation. Far fewer vehicles would reduce collisions on their own, so the fall no longer points specifically to the lane.

critical-thinking-s05-q02: Strengthen a causal claim by showing the effect tracks the cause where other factors are held similar. A comparison with matched schools rules out much of what else might separate breakfast-eaters from their peers.

critical-thinking-s05-q03: When a condition resolves on its own, recovery after treatment is exactly what you would see with no treatment at all. The evidence therefore fails to distinguish a working remedy from an inert one.

critical-thinking-s05-q04: A high score among self-selected respondents describes only those who chose to respond. If unhappy callers systematically stay silent, the sample is skewed towards praise before a single rating is given.

critical-thinking-s05-q05: Random assignment is the strongest ordinary tool for causal claims because it stops cautious runners from clustering in one group. Popularity, price, and plausibility leave the underlying comparison untested.

critical-thinking-s05-q06: Counting heads treats every visit as interchangeable. If the smallest group is also the one with no alternative, the closure removes the service entirely for them, which is a cost the raw total conceals.

critical-thinking-s05-q07: A comparison area shows what would have happened anyway. If untouched towns fell just as far, the drop reflects a wider trend rather than the local policy.

critical-thinking-s05-q08: Before-and-after scores blend the training with practice effects, maturation, and everything else happening meanwhile. An untrained comparison group separates the training's contribution from the rest.

critical-thinking-s05-q09: Silence is only evidence of contentment when complaining was easy. Removing the channel explains the absence of complaints without any change in how passengers feel.

critical-thinking-s05-q10: A snapshot correlation cannot show which way the influence runs or whether geography explains both. Watching temperatures change after planting, against villages that did not plant, adds the sequence the original claim lacked.

critical-thinking-s06-q01: When two things move together, look for a shared driver before assuming one moves the other. Temperature raises both, which produces the correlation without either causing the other.

critical-thinking-s06-q02: Ask what determines who ends up in each group. Where access depends on family resources, those same resources plausibly affect attainment directly, so the lessons and the marks may share a cause.

critical-thinking-s06-q03: Whenever people are sorted into groups by someone's decision, the sorting rule can produce the result on its own. Sending straightforward cases to one ward guarantees faster recoveries there regardless of the care given.

critical-thinking-s06-q04: Distinguish a change in the world from a change in measurement. If lighting makes incidents visible and reportable, recorded crime can rise while actual crime falls or stays flat.

critical-thinking-s06-q05: A pattern noticed after the fact is the beginning of an investigation, not its end. Looking for what else those days have in common tests the shared-cause explanation before any conclusion is drawn.

critical-thinking-s06-q06: Health and wealth influence both the ability to take holidays and life expectancy, so they can generate the association by themselves. Naming such a shared factor is the standard first challenge to an observational finding.

critical-thinking-s06-q07: In a one-season comparison, everything else that changed is a rival explanation. Weather is the largest such influence on a crop, so it must be accounted for before the compost takes the credit.

critical-thinking-s06-q08: Reverse causation means the arrow points the other way: what was treated as the outcome is doing the causing. It is a distinct rival to a shared third factor, to chance, and to a sampling

problem.

critical-thinking-s06-q09: Reverse causation is spelled out by making the outcome the driver. Being uninjured makes stretching easy, which would produce the same association without stretching protecting anyone.

critical-thinking-s06-q10: Screening changes how many existing cases come to light, so counts can jump without any change in how common the condition is. The cautious reading separates detection from occurrence and waits for evidence that distinguishes them.

critical-thinking-s07-q01: Check that the group surveyed matches the group the conclusion describes. A sample assembled by interest in the topic will over-represent that interest, so the finding says little about people at large.

critical-thinking-s07-q02: A mean far above the most common value signals a long tail at the top. Both figures can be correct at once, which is why a single average can badly misdescribe a typical household.

critical-thinking-s07-q03: Small samples swing easily on chance and on who happened to take part. The honest reading treats the result as a promising lead that a larger, better-controlled study should test.

critical-thinking-s07-q04: Proportional changes hide the scale they are built on, and small bases produce dramatic percentages from tiny shifts. Asking for the raw numbers restores the sense of size that the ratio removed.

critical-thinking-s07-q05: The timing decides who can answer, and that decides who the sample contains. Systematically missing people who are at work makes the poll's picture of the electorate lopsided before any answer is recorded.

critical-thinking-s07-q06: A comparative claim is empty until its baseline is named. Thirty per cent less than a rival, than the old recipe, or than a very sweet reference product are three different statements.

critical-thinking-s07-q07: A ratio conceals both the sample size and the selection method. Ten dentists chosen by the advertiser and a thousand chosen at random support very different conclusions from the same nine-in-ten headline.

critical-thinking-s07-q08: Percentage growth from a tiny base sounds far larger than the change it describes. Recovering the absolute amounts turns a striking headline into a modest sum.

critical-thinking-s07-q09: Relative reductions describe the proportion removed, not the amount. Pairing the relative figure with the underlying rate shows how many people are actually affected, which is what a decision turns on.

critical-thinking-s07-q10: Each test carries its own chance of a false positive, and running many raises the odds that one appears somewhere. A finding picked out of a large search should be treated as a hypothesis to retest, not a result.

critical-thinking-s08-q01: A forced choice between two extremes hides the middle ground: partial cuts, savings elsewhere, or new income. Whenever an argument narrows the field to two, check whether the other options were argued away or simply omitted.

critical-thinking-s08-q02: An argument's strength lies in its reasons, not in the biography of whoever offers it. Dismissing the speaker leaves every one of those reasons untouched and unanswered.

critical-thinking-s08-q03: That something has always been done a certain way explains the habit but does not justify it. A reason to keep June would have to appeal to weather, availability, or attendance, not merely to precedent.

critical-thinking-s08-q04: Defeating a distorted version of a position leaves the real one standing. The corrective is to restate the opponent's claim in terms she would accept before responding to it.

critical-thinking-s08-q05: Circular reasoning assumes what it sets out to prove, so anyone who doubted the conclusion has been given no reason to change their mind. Independent support (accuracy checks, corroboration, a track record) would break the circle.

critical-thinking-s08-q06: A slide from a modest first step to an alarming end point needs an argument at every link. Without one, the vivid final scene is doing the persuading that evidence should be doing.

critical-thinking-s08-q07: Three neighbours are both few in number and likely to resemble one another and the speaker. A conclusion about a whole town needs a sample drawn from across it.

critical-thinking-s08-q08: Widespread use can reflect habit, a default setting, or an employer's decision as easily as merit. Quality claims need evidence about performance, not about how many people happen to have adopted something.

critical-thinking-s08-q09: How much we want a conclusion has no bearing on whether the numbers supporting or opposing it are accurate. The consequences may matter greatly to the decision, but they cannot settle a question of fact.

critical-thinking-s08-q10: An argument only works if its terms hold still. When a phrase changes sense partway through, support gathered for the first meaning is silently transferred to a claim about the second.

critical-thinking-s09-q01: A contradiction between instruments that should agree is information: something in the set-up is wrong. Averaging or choosing between them buries that signal instead of investigating it.

critical-thinking-s09-q02: Conflicting figures often measure different situations rather than one being false. Comparing the conditions and definitions behind each number usually explains the gap and tells you which applies to you.

critical-thinking-s09-q03: Disagreement between careful studies is usually a clue about conditions rather than a stalemate. Reading the differences in design often reveals that each result holds in its own setting.

critical-thinking-s09-q04: Under uncertainty, robustness beats optimism: prefer the choice that stays tolerable whichever way the unknown resolves. This keeps the gap in the open rather than pretending it away or refusing to act.

critical-thinking-s09-q05: A one-sided case cannot show whether the option survives its strongest objections. Asking for the contrary evidence and its treatment is how a presentation becomes an appraisal.

critical-thinking-s09-q06: Weak evidence is not the same as no evidence, and dropping it quietly makes a decision look better founded than it is. Recording strength alongside content lets the uncertainty inform what is decided.

critical-thinking-s09-q07: Revise when the evidential basis changes, not when the social weather does. Distinguishing new information from new opinion keeps a mind open without making it merely changeable.

critical-thinking-s09-q08: Agreement accumulated from a narrow reading list measures the list, not the question. Deliberately seeking the best opposing case is the practical test of whether a view is well founded.

critical-thinking-s09-q09: Assess accounts element by element rather than accepting or rejecting them whole. Independent agreement on a distinctive detail is strong corroboration, while sequence is among the first things memory blurs.

critical-thinking-s09-q10: Vivid cases are memorable but few and unsystematically chosen, so they cannot settle what happens on average. They are still useful as leads, flagging harms or mechanisms a study may not have measured.

critical-thinking-s10-q01: Statistics drawn only from those who finished exclude everyone the course failed. If most starters dropped out, a high pass rate among the remainder is a fact about survivors rather than about effectiveness.

critical-thinking-s10-q02: A measure only tracks success if the thing being measured means what the argument assumes. Falling tonnage against falling material could indicate progress, so the indicator needs interpreting before it condemns the scheme.

critical-thinking-s10-q03: Compare the group sampled with the group named in the conclusion. Members chose to join and use the service, so their views cannot stand in for a public that includes people who do neither.

critical-thinking-s10-q04: Identify where the argument's language widens. Diet covers everything eaten and drunk, so falling sales of one category leaves open whether people substituted something else or changed nothing overall.

critical-thinking-s10-q05: Two weaknesses compound here: the measure covers only those who complained, and the success criterion records closure rather than a fixed problem. Together they cut the link between the statistic and the quality claimed.

critical-thinking-s10-q06: Final results reflect where pupils started as well as what the school added. Measuring the change from entry to exam isolates the school's contribution from its intake.

critical-thinking-s10-q07: An argument can be internally tidy and still be incomplete. Weighing one benefit without canvassing the other consequences is the commonest way a valid-looking case reaches the wrong recommendation.

critical-thinking-s10-q08: Read a study's population and duration as the boundary of what it can support. An unqualified claim of safety extends the finding to groups and timescales the trial never observed.

critical-thinking-s10-q09: Consultations are answered by volunteers, and opposition is a stronger motivator to reply than contentment. The ratio therefore describes those moved to write in, not the population the conclusion is about.

critical-thinking-s10-q10: Appraisal has three separable steps: the truth of the premises, the strength of the link to the conclusion, and the completeness of the case. Starting from the conclusion, counting reasons, or deferring to a speaker each skips at least one of them.

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