Critical Writing



'Your writing is too descriptive, you need to be more critical!' – This is a common piece of feedback. This handout will help you approach critical writing with confidence

When assessing a text, you should consider the following...

Provenance

We can learn a lot about a text by considering *where it comes from*. Think about who wrote the text, and how this might influence it. All texts come from a specific time and place – it is important to consider these things.

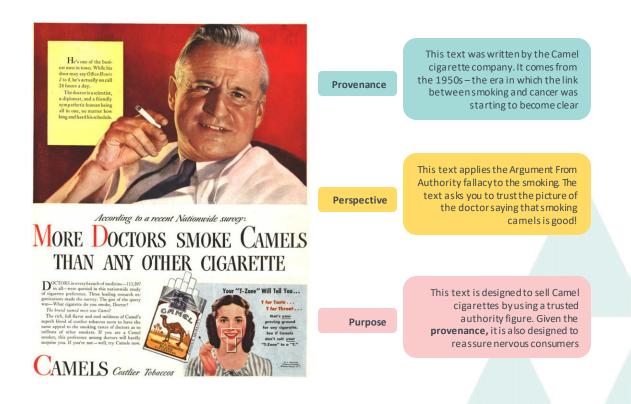
Perspective

What viewpoint does the text present? Remember, it is just as important to consider what the text *leaves out*. It may be that the text only presents *some* of the relevant information – think about the effect of presenting the information in this way

Purpose

Why does the text exist? What does the writer hope to achieve by writing it?

Here is an example of applying the 3Ps to a source



So, how do we write about this?



As with all academic writing, clarity is key. You can use the following prompts to start your critical writing. Remember – it's important to get straight to the point!

Provenance	Perspective	Purpose
This text originates from	This text takes a approach	This text in intended to
This text was produced by	This text focuses on	The purpose of this text is
This text is from (year), which tells us	This text chooses not to focus on	Based on the provenance and perspective, this text is designed to

For example....

"Amazon was	founded in a	garage in	Seattle"	(Amazon 2020)
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This text is an account of Amazon's early history written by Amazon itself. It is a consumer-facing text, and therefore has a vested interest in presenting the company in a positive light

This source takes an individualist approach. It emphasises Amazon's humble beginnings and omits other factors such as the financial backing Bezos received from his parents to start the company

This source exists to promote Amazon and uses a relatable 'rags to riches' story to do so. The source is designed to portray Amazon positively

Check out our workshops on: Synthesis, Paraphrasing, and Critical Reading





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