

Reading for criticism and evaluation

In the second and third readings our processing is a lot more active. In the second we analysed the passage so we could take out the structure, while in the third we're maintaining a dialogue with the author, through which we're able to criticise and evaluate his arguments. If you read Chapters 8 and 9 again you will see the issues to focus on, but the following checklist will help as a convenient guide.

Criticism and evaluation – checklist

Evaluating arguments	1	What are the key claims made by the author?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	Does she develop them consistently?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	Does she leave some parts undeveloped which could lead to alternative conclusions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	Have any assumptions been made without acknowledging them?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating evidence	1	Does she use enough evidence to back up her arguments?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	What kind of evidence is it and does she describe it accurately? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From primary or secondary sources? • Statistical – how is it described? Is it accurate? • Anecdotal – how reliable/ representative is this? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	Does she draw reasonable inferences from it to develop her arguments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does she draw conclusions that are too strong? • Is the evidence relevant to her arguments? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	What alternative inferences can be drawn from the evidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	What do other authors have to say about this?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating language	1	Is she consistent in the way she uses words or do they mean different things at different times?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	Is the meaning of her arguments obscured by the use of jargon and abstractions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	Do you need to analyse concepts to reveal the hidden implications of her arguments?	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information, see *How to Write Your Literature Review*, Chapter 15.