# Essential Skill: Critical Thinking

This rubric was created using the *NMHED Essential Skill Rubrics* and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) *Written Communication VALUE Rubric*.

Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

Critical thinking is the intellectual process of evaluating information, explanations, and arguments before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Proficient critical thinkers are able to apply informed and reasoned thinking to problems in their respective fields. As such, this rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes.

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| **Dimensions** | **0 = No Evidence** | **1 = Emerging** | **2 = Developing** | **3 = Proficient** |
| **Problem Setting:** Delineate a problem or question to be considered critically. | No problem or question is stated.  | An open-ended problem or question, appropriate to the context, is stated without clarification or description. | An open-ended problem or question, appropriate to the context, is stated, but the description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. | An open-ended problem or question, appropriate to the context, is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all the relevant information necessary for a full understanding.  |
| **Evidence Acquisition:** Identify and gather the information/data necessary to coherently address the problem or question. | No evidence addressing the problem or question is submitted or referred to. | Some, but not sufficient, evidence is acquired from source(s) with minimal or no consideration of its appropriateness to the problem or question. | Evidence is taken from source(s) to minimally address the problem or question at hand, with some consideration of its appropriateness. | Evidence is taken from source(s) to sufficiently address the question or problem, with a thorough consideration of its appropriateness. |
| **Evidence Evaluation:** Evaluate the information given by sources for credibility (e.g. bias, reliability, validity), probable truth. | No evaluation of information taken from evidence is provided.  | Information taken from source(s) is minimally evaluated, but not enough to develop a well-rounded assertion of its credibility. | Information taken from source(s) is evaluated, providing some justified assertions of its credibility, but without sufficient awareness of the evaluation process itself (such as personal assumptions). | Information taken from source(s) is evaluated, providing some justified assertions of its credibility, and giving sufficient consideration of the evaluation process itself (such as personal assumptions). |
| **Reasoning/Conclusion:** Develop conclusions and outcomes that reflect an informed, well-reasoned argument. | No conclusions, solutions, or outcomes are developed in an argument. | Conclusion(s) is/are given, but are inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes and solutions are oversimplified. | Conclusion(s) is/are logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | Conclusion(s) is/are logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. |

**Student Artifact Guidelines:** This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.