

# Access Reading

Study Skills Session, Supporting Documents

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Name:**

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**PhD tutor:**

Abbie

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**Subject Strand:**

History related courses

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Critical thinking:

Critical thinking can be defined as the process of working out **what** you think and **why** you think this.

Critical thinking is essential to all subject disciplines at university study. It is very common for new university students to receive feedback that they need to think thus write more critically to develop their essays and ultimately receive higher grades.

At university critical thinking also involves:

- Identifying **what you want to know**, and **why**.
- Sourcing **relevant and reliable** information.
- Grounding your thinking in this **evidence**.
- Addressing **contradictions** in wider academic thinking.

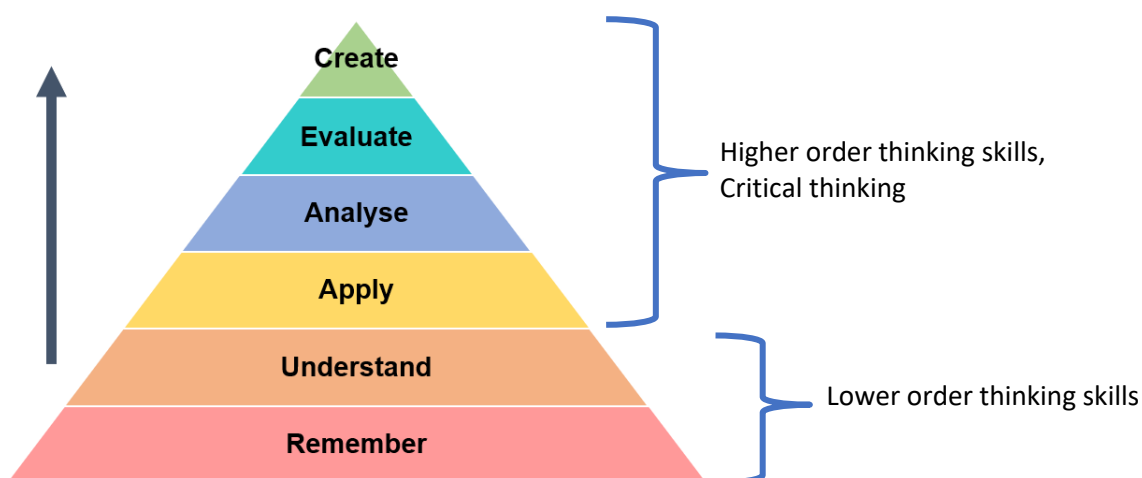
Critical thinking is an important study skill that you will develop at university, practising this skill before enrolling at university to help you make a smoother transition academically.

Bloom's Taxonomy:

To help establish how critical we are being we can utilise Bloom's Taxonomy. Through Bloom's Taxonomy we can see the stages of learning as a hierarchy of critical analysis.

"Remember" requires the least amount of critical thinking and "Create" requires the most. The higher your university work sits on the pyramid the more critical you are being. This means when you analyse and evaluate academic literature you are seen to be more critical than those which simply describe theories and claims without questioning their validity.

To achieve a higher level on the pyramid you still need to undertake everything beneath it but be sure not to get trapped there!



<b>Stages</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of words associated with this level</b>
Create	Produce new or original work.	Design, construct, develop, formulate, investigate
Evaluate	Justify a stand or decision.	Argue, defend, support, critique, weigh
Analyse	Draw connections among ideas.	Relate, compare, contrast, examine, question
Apply	Use information in new situations.	Execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate
Understand	Explain ideas of concepts.	Describe, discuss, classify, recognise, paraphrase
Remember	Recall facts and basic concepts.	Define, state, memorise, repeat, quoting

### Marking Criteria Activity:

Have a look at the marking criteria. Use it to assign a mark (out of 100) to the essay extract provided below.

For the suffrage movement, the Representation of the People Act 1918 is arguably the most important piece of legislation enacted, as it gave an estimated six million women the vote for the first time. However, it did not result in equal franchise, as a third of women were excluded, including the young, uneducated working classes. The significance of this is that the act excluded many suffragettes themselves on age grounds, as well as the grassroots support they had gathered among working class women during the war. Bingham argues that the war acted as a catalyst that transformed parliamentary discussions over who should be enfranchised. This could be an explanation as to why the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) ceased to be militant, because they were aware that their civil disobedience appeared unpatriotic and recognised that by supporting the war, they were more likely to earn the respect of the male polity. Overall, although militancy had been an important tactic of the WSPU pre-1914, the war had changed the environment of British politics, and some suffrage leaders' priorities altered, such as Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, who spoke at meetings to help recruit new soldiers, instead of being militant.

**Mark:**    /100

**Why have you awarded this mark?**

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Mark	Content Analysis	Argument & Structure	Research	Evidence	Communication	Presentation
<b>First Class</b> <b>70-100%</b>	Highly perceptive analysis, showing the ability to evaluate received opinion with some independence and originality of thought.	Sustained and clear argument with a coherent structure. Shows good awareness of the wider context.	Comprehensive and wide-ranging research, commanding the use of challenging material that has been well-chosen.	Deploys precise evidence to support the analysis throughout, with evidence of critique, which shows a good understanding of the material.	Clearly communicated, linguistically and grammatically correct, showing some stylistic flair.	Well presented in general, with accurate formatting and references.
<b>Upper Second Class</b> <b>60-69%</b>	Perceptive analysis of some individual points, showing the topic is understood, but not sustained throughout.	Sustained central argument which explore relevant aspects of the topic that remains focused on the task.	Confident command of a good range of factual material which is thorough in coverage but not comprehensive.	Effective use of precise evidence to support the key ideas, and includes some critical reflection, but is not sustained across all sections.	Clearly communicated, with only a few minor mistakes.	Neatly presented, with mostly accurate formatting.
<b>Lower Second Class</b> <b>50-59%</b>	Some thoughtful analysis of individual points, showing a solid, yet general grasp of the topic. Ideas may not be fully developed in all sections and discussion may lack clarity and be descriptive at times.	Generally coherent with some elements of a central structure. The material may not follow on section by section and there may be a focus on irrelevant material.	Some engagement with relevant factual material, but with a notably narrow range, or may use sources which are less appropriate to the task.	Precise evidence is presented in some places but is limited. Key ideas may be supported by generic evidence and critique is not sustained. There may be inaccuracies or omissions,	Clearly communicated for the most part, but there may be confused expressions and grammatical mistakes which hinder communication of ideas.	Formatting is present, but may be inaccurate or inconsistent, with the occasional absence of information about sources.

Why were female MPs important in the 1920s?

Use the space below to note down what you already know about MPs, Parliament, the House of Commons or how voting works.

You may wish to use a mind-map, a list, a flow-chart or any method that suits you best.

## Academic Literature Extract:

*Astor the Fairy Godmother: The Intoxicating Liquor Act 1923* | Mari Takayanagi

Introduction: Astor the fairy godmother The House, therefore, will see that it is in no way my Bill. I am simply the godmother, and I hope a fairy one. Thus spoke Nancy Astor in the House of Commons, as the 'fairy godmother' of the Intoxicating Liquor (Sale to Persons Under Eighteen) Bill in 1923. Despite her claim that 'it is in no way my Bill' because she insisted that credit should go to teachers and others who were promoting the Bill, it was universally known as 'Lady Astor's Bill' inside and outside Parliament. This was because it was her private members' bill, that is to say, a bill put forward by a backbench MP rather than a government minister. It successfully passed through both Houses of Parliament and became an Act on 31 July 1923.

Astor's Bill introduced the principle that people should be aged 18 to buy and drink alcohol in bars. Before 1923, a teenager could go into a pub at the age of 14 to buy and drink beer, perfectly legally; aged 16, he or she could also buy spirits. If this seems strange to us today, it is testament to the long legacy of this Act. Although the Act itself has been superseded by later licensing legislation, the principle established by Astor lives on to this day.

Astor was a strong advocate of temperance: abstinence from alcoholic drink. This stemmed in part from family upbringing, religious views and personal experience (her first husband was an alcoholic), which led her to campaign on issues to ensure the moral safety of children. It was also part of her feminism and concern for children and young people; in her Parliamentary career Astor championed many causes affecting the lives of women and protection of children, including widows and orphans' pensions, provision of nursery schools, raising the age of consent and reducing maternal mortality (Pugh, 2004). Raising the drinking age was consistent with this. Her second husband Waldorf Astor shared her views on drink, and both spoke and published on the issue (N. Astor, 1923; W. Astor, 1925).

Despite its lasting legacy, Astor's Bill is not well-understood today. She is remembered as an advocate of temperance, but her leading role in changing the law has been overlooked. Although there are many biographies of Astor (e.g. Collis, 1960; Sykes, 1972; Langhorne, 1974; Grigg, 1980; Masters, 1981; Fort, 2012), not one has an index entry for the Bill. Only Sykes covers its passage in detail, and he does not examine the Parliamentary sources. As with other aspects of Astor's life and legacy (Turner, 2019), a century on, an examination of her Bill is therefore well overdue.

My thoughts...

Relevant take aways from the extract/information  
presented...

Things I know already about this topic based on  
previous experience/learning...

Things I need to know more about...



Seminar Discussion:

Use this space to note down any ideas from other people in the group during the seminar discussion. You could also use the space here to formulate and expand upon the ideas from your initial read of the text.

Why were female MPs important in the 1920s?

Critical reading notes:

Remember you don't have to answer all the questions, use them in a way you find useful.

<p>What are the key arguments in the text?</p>	
<p>What were the strengths of the argument presented? What was convincing and why?</p>	
<p>What were the weaknesses of the argument? Are there any flaws, gaps or limitations to the argument?</p>	
<p>How can I use this source to answer the essay question? What can be learnt from this article?</p>	
<p>How does this text relate to other information I have read and/or my personal experience? Does it agree, contradict, or challenge my current knowledge?</p>	
<p>Does the author reference other's work which I would be interested/should look at myself?</p>	

Primary Source Extract:

*Nancy Astor's Maiden Speech*

Viscountess ASTOR: I shall not begin by craving the indulgence of the House. I am only too conscious of the indulgence and the courtesy of the House. I know that it was very difficult for some hon. Members to receive the first lady M.P. into the House. [HON. MEMBERS: "Not at all!"] It was almost as difficult for some of them as it was for the lady M.P. herself to come in. Hon. Members, however, should not be frightened of what Plymouth sends out into the world. After all, I suppose when Drake and Raleigh wanted to set out on their venturesome careers, some cautious person said, "Do not do it; it has never been tried before. You stay at home, my sons, cruising around in home waters." I have no doubt that the same thing occurred when the Pilgrim Fathers set out. I have no doubt that there were cautious Christian brethren who did not understand their going into the wide seas to worship God in their own way. But, on the whole, the world is all the better for those venturesome and courageous west country people, and I would like to say that I am quite certain that the women of the whole world will not forget that it was the fighting men of Devon who dared to send the first woman to represent women in the Mother of Parliaments. Now, as the west country people are a courageous lot, it is only right that one of their representatives should show some courage, and I am perfectly aware that it does take a bit of courage to address the House on that vexed question, Drink....

Are we really trying for a better world, or are we going to slip back to the same old world before 1914? I think that the hon. Member is not moving with the times...

He talks about the restrictions. I maintain that they brought a great deal of good to the community. There were two gains. First, there were the moral gains. I should like to tell you about them. The convictions of drunkenness among women during the War were reduced to one-fifth after these vexatious restrictions were brought in. I take women, because, as the hon. Member has said, most of the men were away fighting....

I do not think the country is really ripe for prohibition, but I am certain it is ripe for drastic drink reforms. [HON. Members: "No!"] I know what I am talking about, and you must remember that women have got a vote now and we mean to use it, and use it wisely, not for the benefit of any section of society, but for the benefit of the whole. I want to see what the Government is going to do...

(Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 125 10 Feb 1920 to 27 Feb 1920 (p 1623-1631).

Evidence:

### **Quoting:**

Using a brief segment of a source, word for word.

Typically, students who are new to university over rely on quoting.

Try to only use quotes if how the author presents the information itself is of great significance.

Successfully embedding a quote can use up a substantial amount of your word count.

### **Paraphrasing:**

Putting information from a source into your own words without changing the meaning.

This is a harder skill to master, but it often allows you to convey ideas more concisely

and helps give you a better understanding.

Further resources:

### **Astor 100**

Astor 100 was a historical impact project that celebrated the centenary of Nancy Astor's election. These webpages contain lots of academically rigorous blog posts.

<https://research.reading.ac.uk/astor100/>

### **Open Library of Humanities**

This open access journal contains some of the newest scholarship on Nancy Astor, political women, and the economic climate of the 1920s. It features contributions from academics and archivists, and all articles are available to download in PDF form.

<https://olh.openlibhums.org/collections/414/>

### **Parliament UK**

This website is a fantastic resource for any questions about UK Parliament. There are lots of pages on votes for women, how the House of Commons works and some contributions from the female MPs covered in tutorials.

<https://www.parliament.uk/>

### **Political Manifestoes**

Political parties release a manifesto before every general election, which summarises what they wish to achieve in Parliament if they are voted in by the electorate. Below are digitised collections for the Conservative Party and the Labour Party, which may be useful when writing about history and politics.

Conservative: <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/>

Labour: <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/>

### **The British Library**

The British Library has hundreds of webpages and information written by academics and librarians. These are a great way to learn more about a particular topic in an accessible way, ideal for when you are researching something new.

<https://www.bl.uk/#>

### **The National Archives**

Based in London, the archives hold millions of records. Lots is available online and for free, and there is also plenty of supplementary information available to use in your independent research.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

### **University of Reading History Blog**

As well as teaching students, university academics in the department also contribute to our blog site. Here, you can read more about what staff are working on, with lots of highlights of student work. You'll be able to get a great idea of what our students get up to, and the sort of work you'll be completing.

<https://unireadinghistory.com/>

### **Social Media**

The department runs a thriving Instagram page that posts lots of helpful study tips, reminders, and other helpful information. It's been designed to be a student 'hub' that undergraduates (such as yourself) will be able to refer to and keep up to date with what's going on.

Find us @unirdg\_history on Instagram

If you have any further questions please email:

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