



# Critical Thinking

## Course Description

In today's society, many people experience information overload. We are bombarded with messages to believe various ideas, purchase things, support causes, and lead our lifestyle in a particular way. How do you know what to believe? How do you separate the truth from the myths?

The answer lies in critical thinking skills. The ability to clearly reason through problems and to present arguments in a logical, compelling way has become a key skill for survival in today's world. This two-day workshop will give participants some practical tools and hands-on experience with critical thinking and problem solving.

## Course Objectives

This two-day workshop will teach participants how to:

- Define critical and non-critical thinking
- Identify their critical thinking style(s), including areas of strength and improvement
- Describe other thinking styles, including left/right brain thinking and whole-brain thinking
- Work through the critical thinking process to build or analyze arguments
- Develop and evaluate explanations
- Improve key critical thinking skills, including active listening and questioning
- Use analytical thought systems and creative thinking techniques
- Prepare and present powerful arguments

## Course Content

### Introduction and Course Overview

- You will spend the first part of the day getting to know participants and discussing what will take place during the workshop. Students will also have an opportunity to identify their personal learning objectives.

### Understanding Critical Thinking

- The first session of the course will look at what critical thinking is, some characteristics of critical thinkers, and key critical thinking skills. Participants will also explore ways to develop their critical thinking skills.

### Where Do Other Types of Thinking Fit In?

- Next, participants will look at left and right brain and whole brain thinking.

### Pitfalls to Reasoned Decision Making

- This session will look at some of the barriers to good decision making and explore how to get around them.

### The Critical Thinking Process

- Next, participants will delve into the seven phase critical thinking model. They will also learn about the standards of critical thinking that serve as the foundation for this model. Participants will then practice the process through a case study.

### A Critical Thinker's Skill Set

- This session will give participants some skills necessary for critical thinking: asking questions, probing, and active listening.

### Creating Explanations

- Another important part of critical thinking is being able to clearly explain why something is a particular way. This session will help participants build that skill.

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### Dealing with Assumptions

- Although assumptions can help us get through our everyday lives, they can be a major impediment to critical thinking. In this session, participants will discuss how to reduce the number of assumptions that they rely on.

### Common Sense

- This session will explore a frequently overlooked thinking tool: common sense.

### Critical and Creative Thought Systems

- Next, participants will look at some analytical and inventive thought systems, including De Bono's thinking hats and brainstorming.

### Putting It Into Practice

- This final session will give participants some tips on preparing and presenting a powerful, logical argument. Participants will also have an opportunity to prepare and present a critical thinking presentation, and to evaluate others' presentations with the skills that they have learned.

### Workshop Wrap-Up

- At the end of the day, students will have an opportunity to ask questions and fill out an action plan.