Introduction

Critical Reading presents a systematic approach to the reading and analysis of written text.

Intended for higher intermediate to advanced students in EAP studies, the book takes the learner through the skills fundamental to developing critical awareness: considering place and date of publication; identifying author bias and purpose; evaluating scope of research; distinguishing fact from opinion; comparing the author’s argument to other points of view and to the reader’s own experiences; and ultimately, evaluating the strength of argument and validity of the text with the goal of writing a critical review of an article.

This is achieved through the reading of authentic texts on a variety of subject areas, including nutritional science, environmental science, business, anthropology and more. Addressed here are topics as diverse as the caveman diet, new forms of energy, cheating in sports, computers in education and the effect of social media on human relationships. Texts are taken from academic journals, professional and general-interest magazines, opinion columns, websites and other sources. Materials from Canadian, American, British, Australian and Irish sources are used.

Throughout, the book aims for a balance between “standard” reading skills (pre-reading, comprehension and vocabulary development) and the development of higher-order critical thinking skills. Each chapter follows a similar pattern: pre-reading discussion questions to stimulate interest; comprehension and analysis of the text; and a follow-up section that provides opportunities for synthesis and further research. This final section allows learners to work with the themes and skills of the chapter through oral presentations and/or written tasks.

Critical reading skills are recognized as a crucial component of postsecondary learning skills. Critical Reading aims to set university- and college-bound students on the path to developing the skills they will need for academic success in a variety of disciplines.

Acknowledgments

Many people have provided support and encouragement at various stages of writing this book. These include former teaching colleagues at Sir Sandford Fleming College and Trent University, fellow ELT materials writers, and EAP teachers who responded enthusiastically to my various conference presentations on teaching critical reading. I am grateful for all the words of encouragement I received. I would also like to thank the Pearson team for their enthusiasm for this project, most notably my editor Tessa Hearn for her guidance. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my husband Tom Milburn and my children Adam and Sophie for bearing with me during the writing of this book; I could not have done this without you.

Tania Pattison, Peterborough, Canada
The Date of Publication

April 23, 2014

Obesity: A Public Health Failure?

Tavis Glassman PhD, MPH, MCHES, Jennifer Glassman M.A., CCC-SLP, and David Glassman

Abstract: Obesity rates continue to escalate, bringing into question the efficacy of our current strategies to address the obesity epidemic. The obesity epidemic is responsible for enormous financial burden to the nation, and reduce obesity rates.

With one-third of its population suffering from obesity, the United States is facing a public health failure. This failure is evident in the increasing prevalence of obesity among adults and children, and in the economic impact of obesity-related diseases. The obesity epidemic has been linked to an increased risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and several other chronic conditions. It is estimated that the obesity epidemic will cost the U.S. economy $147 billion per year by 2030.

Obesity represents an immense public health failure. The current strategies to address obesity are not effective, and the obesity epidemic is continuing to grow. The United States needs a national strategy to address the obesity epidemic, and to improve the health of its citizens. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) have recommended a comprehensive approach to address obesity, including policies to promote healthy eating and physical activity, and to reduce the prevalence of obesity among children and adults.

Each chapter contains two or three reading texts from authentic sources (magazines, newspapers, websites and academic journals). These are thematically related and allow students to develop their understanding of the skills taught in the introductory pages.
Questions on comprehension and vocabulary are followed by **Analysis and Discussion** in which students must use higher-order thinking skills to address the issues raised in the reading.

**Focus on Language** enables students to explore word families as a means of developing their vocabulary. Each chapter also features a quick look at another aspect of language use.

**Independent Research** provides an opportunity to expand on the topic of the chapter. Students have the chance to develop their research skills and to pursue an independent investigation of a topic that catches their attention.

In **Synthesis and Written Response**, students consolidate their understanding of the theme and skills presented in the chapter with the production of a short written assignment.

Every chapter ends with **Review** questions that allow users of the book to check their comprehension of key points.
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• why critical reading is an important skill to have  
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• how critical reading goes beyond reading strategies you already know |
| Subject Area: Life Sciences | | |
| **CHAPTER 2** WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO EAT? | Academic or Not? | • how to tell whether or not a text is academic  
• how the peer-review process works  
• why peer-reviewed texts are preferable for academic study  
• why the publication date of a text is important |
| Subject Area: Nutritional Science | | |
| **CHAPTER 3** THE VALUES OF SPORTS | Author Credentials and Bias | • why it is important to know something about the author of a text and the people quoted by the author  
• what bias is and how to recognize it  
• why an author may be biased |
| Subject Area: Sports Studies | | |
| **CHAPTER 4** APPROACHES TO THE GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS | Stance, Audience and Purpose | • how to identify the author’s stance  
• how the author’s intended audience influences the text  
• why the author’s purpose is important |
| Subject Area: Environmental Science | | |
| **CHAPTER 5** LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP | Fact or Opinion? | • how to distinguish facts from opinions |
| Subject Areas: Business Studies, Leadership and Management | | |
| **CHAPTER 6** TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION | Interpreting Evidence 1: Casual Observation and Empirical Research | • how to evaluate conclusions drawn from author experience  
• how to recognize the steps of the scientific method  
• what to consider when reading reports of empirical research |
| Subject Areas: Education, Computer Studies | | |
| **CHAPTER 7** DESIGN AND PRODUCTIVITY | Evidence 2: Other Forms of Support | • how to identify and evaluate evidence not based on author experience: anecdotes, visual items, statistics and quotations from others  
• how authors try to persuade readers using no evidence at all  
• how to evaluate these kinds of evidence |
| Subject Area: Interior Design | | |
| **CHAPTER 8** INEQUALITY, WEALTH AND HAPPINESS | The Text in Context 1 | • why it is important to consider the text in its broader context  
• what a school of thought is and why it is important to know the schools of thought in your area of study  
• how to approach a text that presents an opinion or theory very different from anything else you have read |
| Subject Areas: Economics, Psychology | | |
| **CHAPTER 9** SOCIAL NETWORKS: A MAGIC NUMBER? | The Text in Context 2 | • why it is important to ask yourself whether the text supports your own experiences  
• why it can be difficult to do this |
| Subject Areas: Social Anthropology, Computer Studies | | |
| **CHAPTER 10** LOOKING AT THE STARS | Bringing It All Together: Writing a Critical Review | • the key components of a critical review  
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