

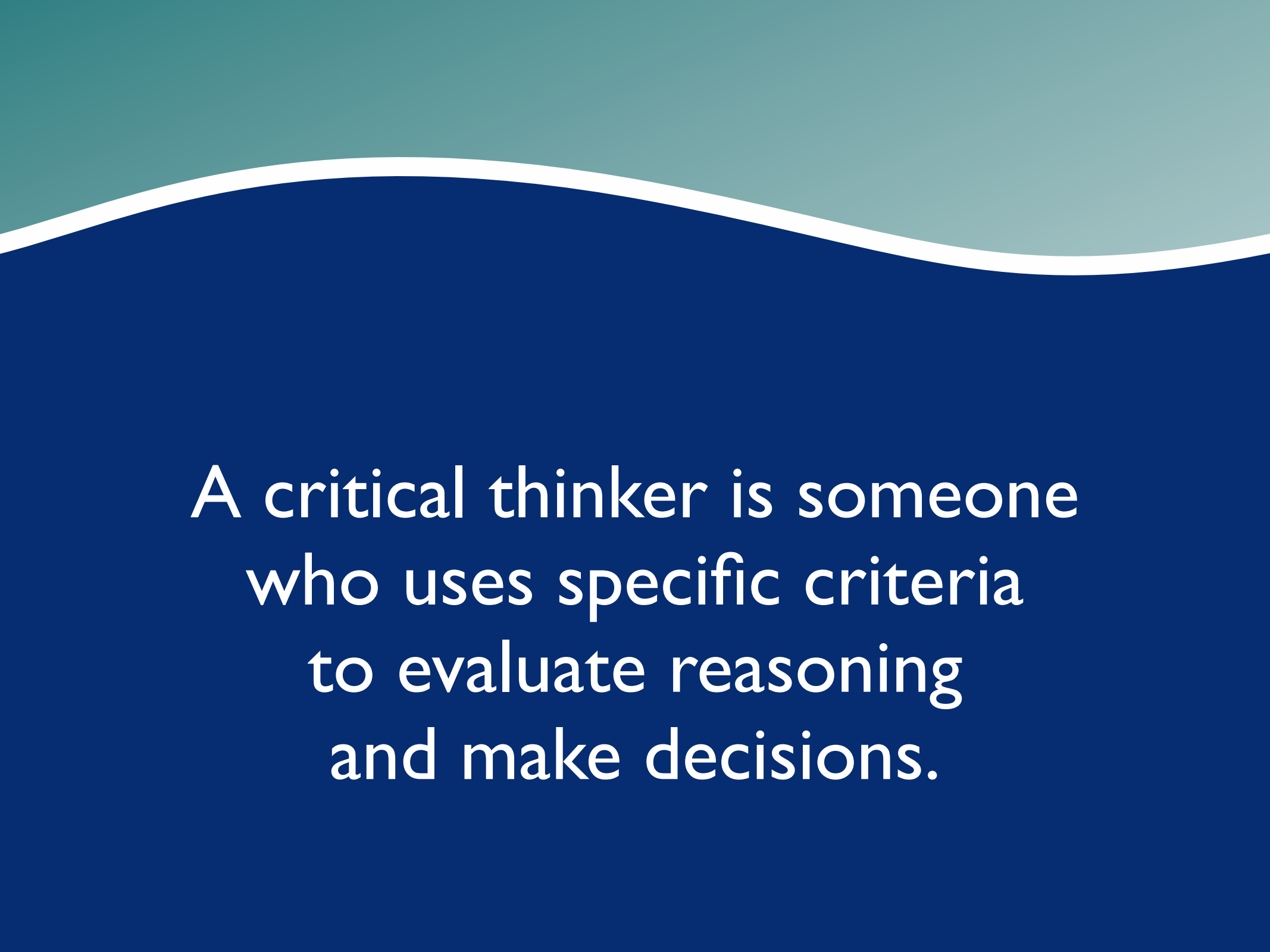


Critical Reasoning

Chapter I
Foundations of Arguments

Chapter covers:

- The structure of an argument
- The three parts of an argument
 - issues
 - conclusions
 - reasons
- An approach to making decisions



A critical thinker is someone who uses specific criteria to evaluate reasoning and make decisions.

The aim of argument,
or of discussion,
should not be victory,
but progress.

Joseph Joubert Pensees (1842)

Rela Munson, a teacher at Gratz College
in Philadelphia, said to my wife Lois,
“We [Jews] are a contentious people.”

However, this could be said of any
people group.

The Structure of Argument

- Argument is War?
 - modern metaphors betray our belief that argument is a contest in which there is a winner and a loser.
 - His argument is indefensible.
 - I demolished his argument.
 - He shot down all my arguments. pg. 3



Why

do we fight?

The Structure of Argument

- 4 A Critical Thinker's definition of an *argument* has no relation to the war metaphor.
- An ***argument*** refers to a ***conclusion*** (claim or position) about an ***issue***.
- This ***conclusion*** is supported by ***reasons*** (premises).

Parts of an Argument

The Issue

- 4 The **issue** is the question being addressed.
- 6 The issue may concern fact, value or policy.

How to find an issue

- Put the issue in question form so that you know what is being discussed. When you listen to a discussion of a political or social issue, think of the question being addressed.
- Or put the issue this way in the form of a statement. “The issue is whether _____.”

What Are the Issues

- What are some **issues** for the contemporary church?
- What personal **issues** are you addressing by coming to Evangel University?
- What are some issues in politics today?

Parts of an Argument

The Conclusion

- 7 Once the ***issue*** has been defined, we can state our ***conclusion*** about the issue.
- The ***conclusion*** can be stated as the position taken about an issue.
- 8 ***Conclusions*** are also called *claims*, *viewpoints*, *opinions* or *stands*.

How to Find a Conclusion-1


- Pg 8 #1 Find the issue and ask yourself what position the writer or speaker is taking on the issue.
- #2 Look at the beginning or ending of a paragraph or an essay: the conclusion is often found in either of these places.

How to Find a Conclusion-2

- Pg 8 #3 Look for conclusion indicator words: *therefore, so, thus, hence*. Also, look for indicator phrases: *My point is, What I am saying is, What I believe is*. Some indicator words and phrases are selected to imply that the conclusion drawn is the right one. These include: *obviously, it is evident that, there is no doubt (or question) that, certainly, and of course*.
- #4 Ask yourself, “What is being claimed by this writer or speaker?”

How to Find a Conclusion-3

- Pg 8 #5 Look at the title of the essay; sometimes the conclusion is contained within the title. For example, an essay might be titled “Why I Believe Vitamins Are Essential to Health.”



Critical Thinkers take a stand
only when they know
something about the issue. pg. 9

Parts of an Argument

The Reasons

- 9 Everything **reasonable** may be supported.
- **Reasons** are the statements that provide support for conclusions.
- 10 **Reasons** are also called *evidence, premises, support or justification*.
- Without **reasons** all you have is a statement of opinion.

How to Find Reasons-1

- pg 10 #1 Find the conclusion then apply the “because trick.” The writer or speaker believes _____ (conclusion) because _____. The reasons will naturally follow the word “because”.
- pg 10 #2 Look for other indicator words that are similar to because: since, for, first, second, third, as evidenced by, also, furthermore, in addition.

How to Find Reasons-2

- pg 10 #3 Look for evidence supporting the conclusion. This support can be in the form of examples, statistics, analogies, reports of studies and expert testimony.

Decision-Making Method 12-14

- A decision involves a dilemma between two or more alternative actions.

1. Define the dilemma in the form of an issue.
2. What do I want this choice to accomplish in my life?
3. List the factors and give importance to each one (on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest)

Decision-Making Method 12-14

● Evaluation:

4. Take each factor and weigh it against your choices.

5. The choice with the highest score is tentatively chosen, and that choice is evaluated.

Exercises Chapter I

Page 17-20

Exercise 4, Page 17

- Educational Ticket
 - The issue is whether giving tickets to bicyclists who run stop signs is an effective education about the dangers.
 - Conclusion: If they learn from the tickets, they will live longer.
 - Reasons: (last paragraph)

Exercise 4, Page 17-18

- Social Security
 - Issue: Would placing congresspersons on Social Security speed its repair?
 - Conclusion: Placing congresspersons on Social Security would speed reconsideration of its flaws.
 - Reasons: With the current “Golden Fleece” plan, congresspersons are immune to the depredations of the flaws in Social Security.

Exercise 4, Page 18

- War on Drugs Fails: We Need a New Approach.
- Issue: Do we need a new approach to drug abuse?
- The Conclusion: A fresh and bold approach is needed - beginning with the legalization of marijuana and the registration of drug addicts.

Exercise 4, Page 18

- War on Drugs Fails: We Need a New Approach.
- Reasons: Try to look at the reasons in the negative.
- “Eliminate the stepping stone to harder drugs.” Marijuana is currently a stepping stone to harder drugs due to the war on drugs.

Exercise 4, Page 19

- Drugged Driving (There may be more than one issue here. There is no clear issue.)
- Issue: Should testing methods for other forms of impaired driving be instituted nationwide?
- Conclusion: Testing methods should be instituted.
- Reasons:

Exercise 4, Page 19, 20

- Save Family Businesses
 - Issue: Should family businesses be protected against “Big Businesses?”
 - Conclusion: Family businesses should be protected.
 - Reasons: Big businesses...
 - destroy culture.
 - put family business out of business.

Chapter Highlights

- Critical thinking about information is necessary in order for us to make clear decisions as citizens, consumers and human beings.
- An argument consists of issues, conclusions and reasons.
- The issue is the question that is raised; our decisions are made easier if we can define the issues on which we are asked to comment or act.

Chapter Highlights (cont.)

- The conclusion is the position a person takes on an issue.
- Reasons, often called premises, provide support for conclusions; reasons are acceptable or unacceptable on the basis of their relevance and quality.
- Critical thinkers carefully consider reasons on all sides of an issue when they make important decisions.

Articles For Discussion

- Talk Show Host Angers Disabled Community
- Radio Show on Rights of Disabled Defended

Exercise Page 23

- What are the issues about freedom of speech and society's treatment of the disabled?
- Is there a right to become pregnant in cases where the likelihood of producing a disabled child exists?
- Is there a right to broadcast controversial ideas in a forum like a radio talk show?

Exercise Page 23

- Take one of the issues raised by this controversy, and discuss how well those in the articles defended it.
- Right to become pregnant?
- Right to express opinions?

Exercise Page 23

Comment on
the excerpt:

Exercise Page 23

Are there any issues discussed by radio and television talk shows that you consider inappropriate? Are certain groups targeted for criticism and others left alone, or is every topic fair game? Give examples to support your answer.

Exercise Page 24

- Each article used a different subheading to explain the controversy:
- Hand Deformity Inherited from Mom Sparks L.A. Dispute.
- Crippled Woman's Pregnancy Debated.
- How do these different subheadings frame the issue? To what extent do you think they are fair and accurate statements about the controversy?