

SAMPLE CRITICAL QUESTIONS

What are the (different) versions of reality created in the text and how are these achieved?	Whose interests might this text serve?	What absences or silences or exclusions are 'in' the text? What details have been omitted?
How does the use of language shape how the reader thinks and feels about a topic, group, issue, self, event, etc?	Who speaks, who listens, who is powerful, who is powerless, who is passive, who is rational, and who is emotional?	What things does the reader need to assume (or bring to the text) in order for the text to 'work' or make sense?
How has language been used to create a certain point of view that appears reasonable and desirable (over another)?	For what purpose was this text created?	What different readings of the text are possible? What knowledge is required for this to occur?
How does the choice of genre shape how the topic is presented and how the text is received by the audience?	What social, political, economic or institutional context needs to be made clear to students for them to interpret the text or understand its creation and use?	What are the truth claims or knowledge assumptions in the text? Where do these come from? Is the representation accurate?
What meaning do we make from pictures, figures or layout?	What events, issues or history is this text embedded in?	Are there problematic binaries (either/or) in the text?

SAMPLE CRITICAL STRATEGIES

Compare contrasting texts	Substitute pictures and images	Substitute words (eg. Use 'he' instead of 'she')
Change endings of stories	Compare historical texts to contemporary texts	Identify and discuss stereotypes and clichés
Move students from literal reading/meaning making to inferential and then critical	Re-design/re-writing a text according to different criteria (eg. stories, photo captions, headlines, for different audience, etc)	Analyze and compare the particular descriptions of people, or places, or events, etc.
Compare two different text genres on the same issue or event	Get students to predict story events and endings	Get students to interpret texts based upon only parts of the text, then reveal the whole text
Provide students with alternative readings or interpretations and get them to discuss the merits of each (eg. who might make such a reading and on what basis, etc.)	Retrieve and interpret certain words, phrases or language use, (eg. compile a list of positive and negative words used to describe something or someone)	Critiquing binary opposites (eg. male V female, or the usual heroes & villains)
Discerning statements of fact from opinion	Word associations	BDA strategies to highlight student assumptions in their initial readings