

50 Ways to Up Your Critical Analysis Game

This list is meant as a tool to further develop critical analysis skills. Although it is not exhaustive, I hope it will spark new ideas for wherever you are in your writing and analysis. Also, I welcome your suggestions! Please send feedback to [Dr. Nina M. Flores](mailto:nina.flores@gmail.com) via email nina.flores@gmail.com or twitter: [@bellhookedme](https://twitter.com/bellhookedme).

1. Consider positionality, including your own
2. Identify how ideas are framed and what information this assumes
3. Work to uncover hidden biases and locate unquestioned assumptions
4. Can you use other texts to see this material in a new way?
5. Can you use other texts to identify gaps in this material?
6. Which experiences are included? Excluded? Is this intentional?
7. Illustrate how dominant ideologies become invisible, embedded in accepted knowledge
8. Critique your own viewpoint. What are your biases?
9. Take a step back, look at the bigger picture
10. Take a step in, tease out a specific element to analyze
11. Write about an old issue in a new context — change the time, place, location
12. Break down dichotomies, reject analyses that end in binaries.
13. Relate to your own knowledge on the issue
14. Question the dominant narrative, then work to include and center your own
15. Consider discourses of individuality versus community
16. Consider discourses of empowerment versus disempowerment
17. What does this mean for addressing injustices, inequities, and inequalities?
18. What are the policy implications? Who benefits? Who is left out?
19. What are the implications for future research?
20. Identify your research agenda, your action agenda, your vision
21. Push existing ideas further, but always give credit — know when your ideas are not new
22. Unpack ideas — what is being argued? What are you trying to add to the conversation?
23. Unpack power dynamics — how is power manifested throughout the text?
24. Challenge the structures within which a text is written
25. Challenge word and phrasing choices
26. Apply a new theoretical framework
27. Expand conceptual definitions
28. Challenge universality
29. Be open to unlearning
30. Apply critical lenses: consider political, social, economic, and cultural implications
31. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to urban, suburban, or rural contexts
32. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to sex, sexual orientation, sexuality, asexuality, and heteronormativity
33. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, and whether folks identify as cis-gendered

34. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to race, ethnicity, creed, and color
35. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to immigration, migration, forced migration, citizenship, refugee status, and whether folks are undocumented
36. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to religion, spirituality, theism, atheism, sacred traditions and customs, and belief systems.
37. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to age, ageism, adultism, cultural perspectives on age, and assigning value or devaluing people based on age
38. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to mental health and physical abilities
39. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to hierarchical class systems, stratification by caste, homelessness, economic inequalities, and economic advantages
40. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to the global political economy, global economic systems, capitalism, transnationalism, and neoliberalism
41. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to imperialism, global hegemony, colonial legacies, and neo-colonialism.
42. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to devaluing indigenous knowledge
43. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to the environment, ecology, and climate
44. Explore intersections of all of the above
45. Set boundaries: Identify your limitations. Explain your definitions, starting points, your approach, assumptions, arguments, and methods
46. Add deeper understanding by answering the hows and whys with qualitative evidence
47. Look to past now to anticipate a trajectory for the future
48. Look to the future to imagine new ways of seeing, learning, and understanding
49. Offer specific alternatives and/or a range of next steps to unfold over time
50. And most importantly, be conscientious, be thorough, and convey your ideas with the confidence that your words, perspectives, and analyses deserves to be heard.

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