

# 50 Ways to Up Your Critical Analysis Game

1. Identify the ways in which ideas are framed, and what information this assumes.
2. Work to uncover hidden biases and locate unquestioned assumptions.
3. Critique your own viewpoint. What are your biases?
4. Consider positionality, including your own as the writer or reader.
5. Can other texts help you see this material in a new way? Can you identify gaps?
6. Which experiences are included? Excluded? Is this intentional?
7. Have dominant ideologies become invisible, embedded in accepted knowledge?
8. Take a step back, look at the bigger picture.
9. Take a step in, tease out a specific element to analyze.
10. Write about an old issue in a new context — change the time, place, people, location.
11. Break down dichotomies, reject analyses that rely on binaries.
12. Draw on your own knowledge about the topic or issue.
13. Question the dominant narrative.
14. Consider approaches that center the individual versus the community.
15. Consider discourses of empowerment versus disempowerment.
16. What are the policy implications? Who benefits? Who is left out?
17. What are the implications for future research?
18. Identify your research agenda, your action agenda, and your vision.
19. Push existing ideas further, but always give credit.
20. Unpack ideas. What is being argued? What are you trying to add to the conversation?
21. Unpack power dynamics. How is power manifested throughout the text?
22. Challenge the structures within which a text is written.
23. Examine vocabulary, terminology, and phrasing choices.
24. Apply a new theoretical framework.
25. Expand conceptual definitions.
26. Challenge universality.
27. Be open to unlearning.
28. Apply critical lenses: consider political, social, economic, and cultural implications.
29. Apply critical lenses: consider urban, suburban, or rural contexts.
30. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to biological sex, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, sexuality, asexuality, and heteronormativity.
31. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, cisgenderism, and identifying as nonbinary or transgender.
32. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to race, ethnicity, racism, identifying as bi-/multiracial, shadism, anti-blackness, and socio-cultural perspectives on race.
33. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to immigration, migration, forced migration, nativism, citizenship, refugee status, and undocumented status.

34. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to religion, spirituality, theism, atheism, sacred traditions and customs, and belief systems.
35. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to age, ageism, adultism, cultural perspectives on age, and assigning value or devaluing people based on age.
36. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to the body, the privilege assigned to certain bodies, how bodies move through space, ability, and disability.
37. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to the mind, mindfulness, mental health, emotional intelligence, and our social, psychological, and emotional well-being.
38. Apply critical lenses: consider the implications of living in a carceral state, the school to prison pipeline, and how incarceration affects families and communities.
39. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to hierarchical class systems, stratification by caste, concentrations of wealth, and who holds 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 settler colonialism, land rights, and devaluing indigenous knowledge and practices.
43. Apply critical lenses: consider implications related to the environment, ecology, sustainability, and a changing climate.
44. Explore the implications of how any of the above might intersect in different contexts.
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 the past to anticipate a trajectory for the future.
48. Look to the future to imagine new ways of seeing, learning, understanding, and being.
49. Offer specific alternatives, possibilities, challenges, or next steps.
50. 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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