

## Chapter 1: What is critical thinking?

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- Critical thinking: Thinking deeper than the surface, not believing everything you see/hear (ex: Best selling diet/advice/investment book; while believable could be a complete sham)
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## Chapter 2: Claims

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- The major conclusion of an authors piece of writing
- Sometimes easy to locate (**explicit** - *ex: I believe COMM 210 is a useless class because....*) sometimes harder to locate (**implicit** - *ex: .... Does not provide value.... COMM 210....* Basically the claim is mixed in with the paragraph, likely the intro)
- Look for cue words such as *therefore, in summary, clearly, etc.*
- Most other statements in the text will be evidence used to back up the authors claim. Ex: “COMM 210 is useless” rest of text will give stats, opinions, etc. about why this class is useless.

### Uncontestable Claims

- Are facts
- You cannot argue against
- Ex: There is a lot of traffic on Decarie in the mornings.  
COMM 210 is required to graduate from JMSB.  $2+3=5$
- *Note: the claim will most likely never be uncontestable on the exam. Uncontestable claims are only 100% fact - stupid almost.*

### Contestable Claims

- Anything that can be argued against
- Ex: John is smarter than Mary. Being nice gets you nowhere in life. Alix Box is renewing Second Cup. COMM 210 is boring.

When identifying a claim, we try to present the main ideas/opinions of the author accurately and concisely. Ex: Alix Box plans to revamp the Second Cup brand in order to allow it to be successful again.

## Chapter 3: Evidence

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- Evidence responds to the statement: Why is this true?
- When looking to identify evidence look for cue words such as *because, studies show, for example, etc.*
- Evidence alone does not make your claim legit, must have **\*\*SPAARC\*\***

Qualities of good evidence (hella important)

### **S: Sufficient**

*Is there enough evidence?*

### **P: Precise**

Giving precise numbers/evidence. Ex: *83% of JMSB students like going to McKibbins is better and more legit than Lots of JMSB students like McKibbins. 63 people attended the tutorial for COMM 215.*

### **A: Accurate**

Author provides good information. No grammar or spelling mistakes, quotations are true, etc.

### **A: Authoritative**

Who is giving this information? A scientist knows more about cancer than your friend James. Authorities (people who hold authority) are

people with training, experience, etc. Ex: CEO Alix Box is an authority on Second Cup therefore her opinion/quotes/whatever is decent evidence.

### **R: Representative**

Is this evidence representative of many people? Ex: *COMM 210 is boring* - but author only asked the 30 people in her own class and not any other sections. This is not representative. *People like Second Cup better than Starbucks* - surveyed 10K Montrealers, this is representative.

### **C: Clearly Expressed**

Giving summaries, clearly state the evidence so that it is understandable.

Arguments should be presented with a claim and evidence to follow.

## Chapter 4: Underlying Assumptions

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- They are *a logical link that fills the gap between the evidence and the claim.*
- Even with good evidence (clearly expressed, authoritative, representative, accurate, sufficient) if the underlying assumptions are questionable then the claim can be disproved.

Ex: *Students spent many wasted hours reading articles for COMM 210 yet still did not do well on the final exam.* The author believes the time was wasted because the students did not get A's. Some may agree however, others may argue that they still learned many things by reading these articles (new theories, discipline, whatever..)

- Different people hold different values (i.e. learning is more important than grades or vice versa)

You must be able to pick out underlying assumptions in an article. Ex: *Second Cup will never see success people Starbucks is too good.* Maybe this person is too white girl and we should not believe her?

- To find: ask yourself *what must this person believe in order to have written that?* Look for gaps between evidence and the claim. Look for any emotion. (Likely underlying assumptions will be hard to find in exam articles)

**Reality Assumptions:** Stem from what that person has lived. Ex: *Winter is not that bad.* This person must have never been to Montreal. *Employees will never be self motivated therefore managers must monitor them.* This person has perhaps only worked

with un-motivated employees and therefore believes all employees to be like such.

**Value Assumptions:** Based on this person's beliefs and are very hard to challenge. Ex: *It's bad to be gay. Don't eat meat.*

Evaluate the evidence to accept or reject claims if you are unsure of the underlying assumptions.

## Chapter 5: Causal Claims

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- Cause and effect
- Rival cause: another reason this is happening. Ex: *Students are failing COMM 210 because the articles are too boring.* Could there be another reason? Maybe the exam is too hard, maybe their other classes are too hard so they are not studying 210, etc.
- There are usually more than one causes to an event

Example from book (would make sense as an exam question)

“... core vision and purpose lead to a businesses success. The more you define your companies vision the more you will be successful...”

*Perhaps there are other reasons that these companies have been successful.* Perhaps all had donations from their rich fathers. Or perhaps these companies have visions because they are successful. This could be argued.

Other note: just because two events happened sequentially does not mean they are related. Ex: *Alix Box became CEO of Second Cup then business starts going up.* Perhaps there were changes put into place before she stepped in and she had nothing to do with them.

## Chapter 6: Techniques of persuasion

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- Anticipate counter objections
- Present negative evidence and address why it is not completely relevant
- Think of rival causes when brainstorming to know how to address them
- Rhetoric = persuasive

## Chapter 7: Writing a persuasive essay

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- Make an outline of main claim and sub claims and then collect evidence (essay skeleton)
- Include sources from the article and highlight why they are effective (adds authority)
- Be precise
- Use concept maps and brainstorming
- When mentioning articles make sure to mention author, title and a little bit of what its about to not lose points

*Ex: In Chandler's theory of industrial success he highlights the importance of being a first mover, someone who takes the first step in an industry, in order to benefit from economies of scope (using the same raw materials to produce more items) as well as economies of scale (producing larger volumes to save on costs).*

## Popular Business Terms and Expressions

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(the ones that are actually relevant to the course)

**Board of directors:** people with decision making power (policies, finances, goals, etc.)

**Bottom Line:** Expresses how successful a company has been (\$\$\$).

*Triple bottom line:* Finances, Social (donations, etc.), Environmental (not polluting)

**Knowledge workers:** people who work using their intelligence rather than hard skills. Ex: Accountant vs. Salesman at The Bay

**Shareholders:** Part owners of the company.

**Stakeholders:** People who are influenced by a company. i.e. workers, customers, etc. would all suffer if The Bay went out of business.

**Vision:** image of the future of a business. See Collins & Porras.