



Critiquing a Journal Article

What is meant by Critique?

A critique is a detailed analysis or an evaluation of something, in this case a journal article.

Being critical requires:

- Understanding the topic
- Analysis of evidence
- Evaluating
- Making a judgement based on evidence
- Developing your argument – Who, What, Why, When?

Being critical involves:

- Questioning – Who? What? Why? How? So what?
- Exploring – examine different perspectives on the same topic.
- Evaluating – look for strengths and weaknesses. Consider credibility, reliability and validity of the information.
- Developing your critical argument in relation to the evidence presented, i.e., your opinion backed up with facts.

Literature review

- To critique a journal article you must understand the context of the research.
- Use the library's Discover@Bolton service to find related articles.
- Critically review the related literature. Does your author's article support or challenge the existing literature?
- Develop your argument supporting or disagreeing with the article. Use evidence from existing literature to make your case.

Top tips when reviewing literature:

- Make notes as you read
- Organise your notes into different points relevant to the article you are critiquing.
- Keep a list of all sources you have read.

- Books, journal articles, reports etc..
- Always keep a record of the full reference.

Too much work at the end?

- Reference as you go along
- Use a referencing management tool such as Refworks in Discover@Bolton

After your review of the literature, critique your article by asking the following questions:

1. What is the article about?
2. Why did the authors carry out the research?
3. What were the methods of research and data analysis
4. What did the results indicate? Think about the implications of the results in the context of your literature review?

Writing your critique

Introduction

- Begin with a description of the article.
- Why are you critiquing it? Why is it important?
- You may make general references to the literature.
- Do not include evidence or your argument – this will come in the main body.
- This should help give you the structure of your main body.

Main Body

- Each paragraph should contain a new idea which would expand your argument.
- Include your evaluation and position on research design, research methods, results analysis, author's conclusions and contribution to the literature.
- You may use phrases like 'admittedly', 'it is true', or 'one might object here' and then strengthen your argument with words like 'however', 'but', or 'nevertheless'.

Conclusion

- Provide a brief summary of the main points that you have made and re-affirm your position.
- Suggest potential improvements to the research and ideas for further research.

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