

Questions to answer while reading arguments

To evaluate research articles, use this list of questions to help you identify strengths and limitations.

First reading: overall credibility

- Who is the author and when was this written?
- What is the author's approach and perspective?
- What is the author saying? (Try to sum up the argument in your own words)
- What are the main points of this text?
- Whose perspective is left out of the text?
- What facts are left out of the text?
- On first reading, does this seem a credible argument? Why?

Second reading: argument and evidence

- What evidence has been presented to support the argument?
- What is the quality of the evidence? (Is the evidence anecdotal or supported by research?)
- Is the evidence recent and relevant?
- Is there a logical development of ideas?
- Which parts of the argument do you agree with and why?
- Which parts of the argument do you disagree with and why?
- What assumptions does the author make?

Style and tone

- Is the argument clearly expressed?
- Does the writer's language, tone or choice of examples reveal any biases?
- Does the author use emotive terms or examples to persuade the reader?
- Do these strategies enhance or detract from the argument?

Overall assessment

- Does the writing challenge your own biases, assumptions and beliefs?
- What were the strengths of the argument?
- What were the weaknesses of the argument?
- How convincing was this piece of writing?
- What connections do you see between this text and other texts?