



## Critical thinking is defined as:

The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement.

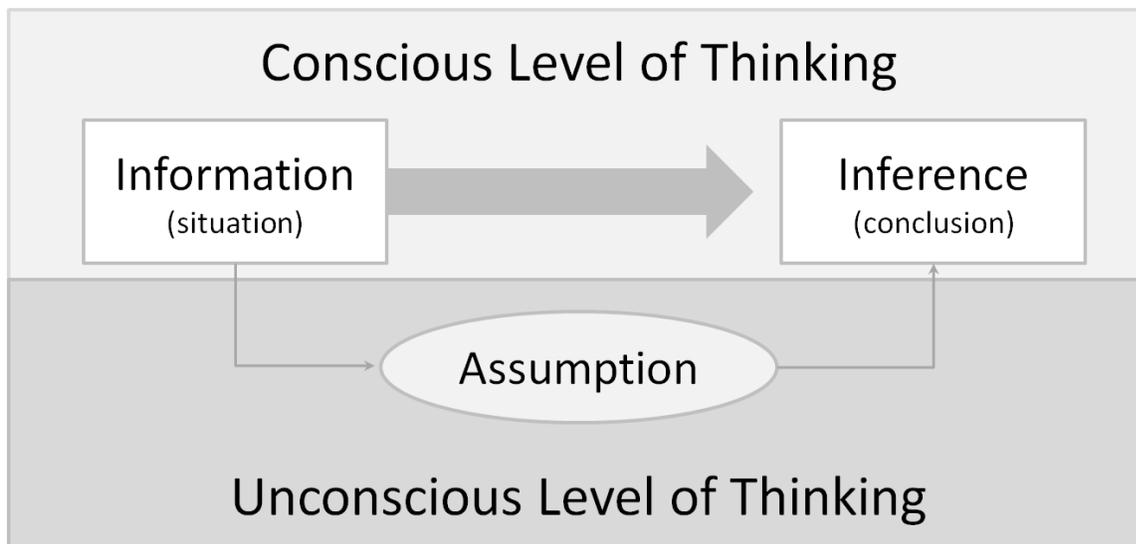
This analysis and evaluation requires one to know the difference between two cerebral activities.

### Inference vs. Assumption

The best thinkers distinguish between inferences and assumptions.

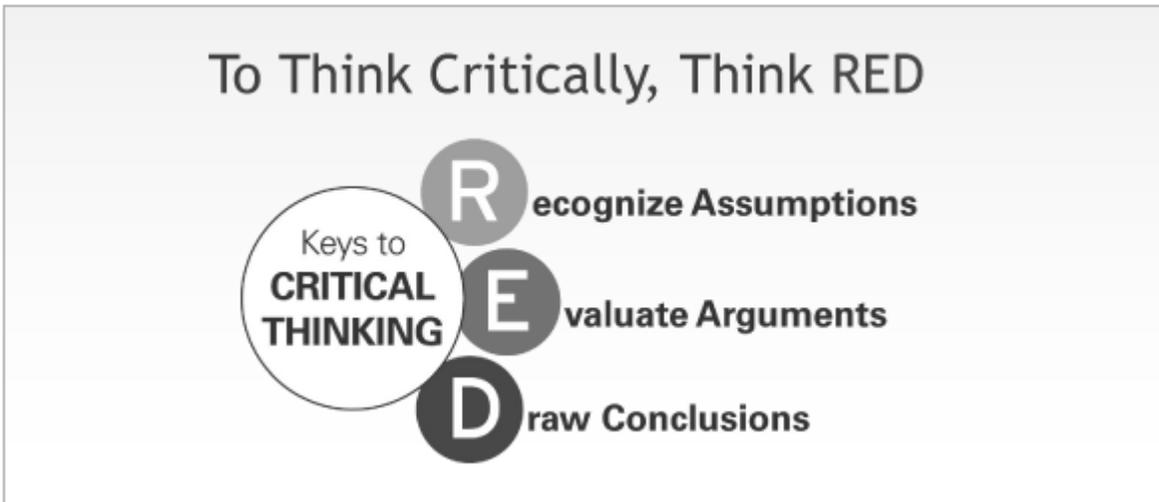
Inference – a step of the mind by which one concludes that something is true in light of something else being true.

Assumption – something we take for granted or presuppose, usually something we previously learned and do not question.



"Critical Thinking: Learn the Tools Best Thinkers Use" page 31

# Pearson's RED Critical Thinking Model



## **Recognize Assumptions**

This is the ability to separate fact from opinion. It is deceptively easy to listen to a comment or presentation and assume the information presented is true even though no evidence was given to back it up. Noticing and questioning assumptions helps to reveal information gaps or unfounded logic. Taking it a step further, when we examine assumptions through the eyes of different people (e.g., the viewpoint of different stakeholders), the end result is a richer perspective on a topic.

How to use it: When you're gathering information, listening to what people say, or when assessing a situation, think about what assumptions you have going on. Perhaps you assume that a trusted co-worker is providing reliable information – but is there really evidence to back that up? Learn to see gaps in logic, and opinion disguised as fact.

## **Evaluate Arguments**

The art of evaluating arguments entails analyzing information objectively and accurately, questioning the quality of supporting evidence, and understanding how emotion influences the situation. Common barriers include confirmation bias, or allowing emotions-yours or others-to get in the way of objective evaluation. People may quickly come to a conclusion simply to avoid conflict. Being able to remain objective and sort through the validity of different positions helps people draw more accurate conclusions.

How to use it: We often have problems sorting through conflicting information because we unknowingly let our emotions get in the way, or because – like just about everyone – we sometimes only hear what we want to hear. Learn how to push all that aside, and analyze information accurately and objectively.

## **Draw Conclusions**

People who possess this skill are able to bring diverse information together to arrive at conclusions that logically follow from the available evidence, and they do not inappropriately generalize beyond the evidence. Furthermore, they will change their position when the evidence warrants doing so. They are often characterized as having "good judgment" because they typically arrive at a quality decision.

How to use it: This is the payoff. When you think critically, the true picture becomes clear, and you can make the tough decision, or solve a difficult problem.

<http://www.thinkwatson.com/think-red/red-critical-thinking-model>

# Suggested Reading List

## Critical Thinking

The State Library has prepared a list of [audiobooks](#), [books](#) and [videos](#) for the topic "Problem Solving and Decision Making." The list can be found at the following link:

<http://kdla.ky.gov/employees/resourcelists/Pages/EmployeeManagementTrainingResources.aspx>

or you can call: Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives at 502-564-8300 for more information.

### **Audiobooks**

Kahneman, Daniel. **Thinking, Fast and Slow**. Westminster, MD: Books on Tape, 2011. Call number: SR 153.42 Kahn

### **Books**

Autry, James A. **The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your self-respect**. New York: Morgan Road Books, 2006. Call number: 650.13 Autr

Bennett, Mark D. **A Field Guide to Good Decisions: Values in Action**. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006. Call number: 153.83 Benn

Dawson, Roger. **Secrets of Power Problem Solving (ebook)**. Pompton Plains, NJ: Career Press, 2011. Download from Kentucky Libraries Unbound

Hanson, Mirja P. **Clues to Achieving Consensus: a Leader's Guide to Navigating Collaborative Problem Solving**. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2005. Call number: 658.4036 Han

Kaner, Sam. **Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making**. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Pfeiffer Wiley, 2007. Call number: 658.4036 Kane

Kemp, Jana M. **Moving out of the Box: Tools for Team Decision Making**. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008. Call number: 658.4036 Kemp

Kopeikina, Luda. **The Right Decision Every Time: How to Reach Perfect Clarity on Tough Decisions**. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005. Call number: 658.403 Kope

Tague, Nancy R. **The Quality Toolbox**. 2nd ed. Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press, 2005. Call number: 658.4036 Tagu

**Wise Decision-making in Uncertain Times: Using Nonprofit Resources Effectively**. New York: Foundation Center, 2006. Call number: 658.048 Wise



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