



Being a Responsible Critical Thinker and Collaborating with Others

- Construct and evaluate arguments
- Furnish support for one's beliefs
- Assume responsibility for one's actions
- Collaborate with the members of a group
- Share obligations
- Listen and communicate with others

In the settings of college, the workplace, and the community the ability to work with other people in group projects is an increasingly important skill to develop. As adults, we are often required to be able to critically read and evaluate written and oral communication, as well as to communicate our own ideas in a respectful and effective manner. However, collaborating with other people can be a difficult task, especially if one is unaware of effective communication skills. Following are some suggestions for developing those skills needed to be an effective critical thinker and collaborator.

- When evaluating information and arguments, be wary of biased and slanted language, but keep an open mind to the ideas and opinions of others. Too often, we close our minds when faced with opinions or information with which we don't agree. Practice being a critical but open-minded listener. Use patience and respect while listening to others' ideas.
- As a critical thinker, you should critically evaluate the arguments of others, but this also means you have the responsibility of constructing your own arguments so they are unbiased and supported with credible evidence. It is good to have beliefs, but remember to support your opinions.
- Another responsibility one has as a critical thinker is to take responsibility for one's actions. Everyone makes mistakes and it is a responsible person who acknowledges his/her error and learns from it. A person who accepts responsibility for her/his arguments and actions builds integrity in the eyes of others, and a person with integrity is often respected and listened to.
- Finally, group collaboration requires a commitment to shared obligations. For group work to be effective, all members must contribute equally to the problem task. Successful teamwork entails full participation by all members and not just a dedicated few.

The qualities of a critical thinker: truth-seeking, open-minded, analytical, systematic, self-confident, inquisitive, and mature.