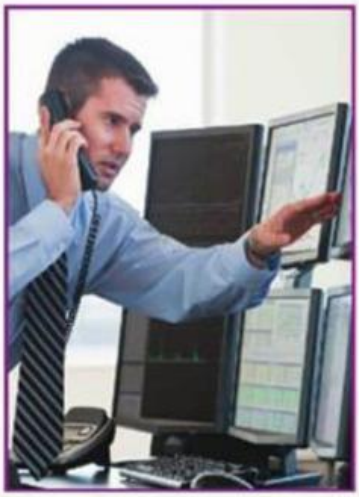
READING

Critical Thinking

Have you ever said something – and then regretted that you didn't think carefully before opening your mouth? What happened?

1 "Think before you speak!" Has anyone ever said that to you? It's only human to react quickly and perhaps emotionally to things that happen. But without giving ourselves sufficient thinking time, we may see things in terms of black and white instead of considering various shades of gray or other colors. Also, it's all too easy to ignore connections and consequences.

2 At one level, thinking is fairly simple. For instance, it might simply involve making a shopping list. However, there is a deeper and more complex level of thinking. This is often called "critical thinking," and it has several characteristics. First, it requires that you rely on reason rather than emotion. This means you have to look objectively at all available evidence and decide if it is true, false, or perhaps partly true. Second, you have to be self-aware and recognize your biases and prejudices because these may cause you to think subjectively. A third characteristic is that you need to be open to new ideas and interpretations.



3 Critical thinking can help you in just about everything you do. One of the most important things it helps you do is solve problems. This has always been an asset in many traditional fields, such as education, research, business and management. But it's also very useful to help people keep up with the new, fast-moving knowledge economy, which is driven by information and technology. Modern workers often have to analyze and integrate information from many different sources in order to solve problems.

4 We all sometimes speak before we think, and we all have blind spots. Nevertheless, while thinking critically doesn't always happen automatically, it will certainly serve you well whatever you do in life.

A Read the article. Then write the number of each paragraph next to its main idea.

..... For many people, critical thinking is useful in the workplace.
..... It's worth the effort to think critically.
..... We often don't allow ourselves enough time to think.
..... Critical thinking has three important aspects.

B Read about these people. Which of the three characteristics of critical thinking did they need to apply?

a = Check if the evidence is true. b = Recognize your prejudices. c = Be open to new ideas.

..... 1. Jane worked as a bank teller for ten years. She never considered doing anything else. When she was offered a promotion, she refused it.
..... 2. Bella received an email from someone she didn't know. The email said she had won $1 million in the lottery. She immediately bought a new car.
..... 3. Ian thinks our new neighbors are loud, but I disagree. I think he's just more sensitive to the noise because they play music and watch TV shows that aren't in English.

LIVEWORKSHEETS