

# Virginia State University General Education

## CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

*For more information, please contact [value@aacu.org](mailto:value@aacu.org)*

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 16 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

### Definition

**Critical thinking is the ability to use information, ideas, and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Critical thinking also includes locating, evaluating, interpreting, and combining information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.**

### Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

## Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- **Ambiguity:** Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- **Assumptions:** Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are “taken for granted or accepted as true without proof” (Dictionary.com, 2009, para. 1; [www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions)).
- **Context:** The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.
- **Evaluate:** In critical thinking, evaluation refers to the process of critically assessing or judging the quality, validity, relevance, or effectiveness of ideas, arguments, evidence, or information. Evaluation involves analyzing and assessing the merits and weaknesses of various perspectives, claims, or assertions to make informed judgments or decisions. Evaluating in critical thinking can also include synthesizing information from various sources or perspectives to identify patterns, connections, overarching themes, to form a comprehensive understanding. *Reflect on how personal beliefs or experiences may influence one's evaluation and strive to maintain objectivity and open-mindedness.*
- **Literal meaning:** Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, “she was green with envy” would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- **Metaphor:** Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, “she was green with envy” is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.
- N/A: Not applicable to the assignment. Artifact is not appropriate for the assessment of this SLO.



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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard (Assess @ Reinforce)</b>	<b>Approaching</b>	<b>Introducing (Assess @ Introduce)</b>	<b>Not Evident Or Not Applicable</b>
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0 / N/A</b>
<b>Explains the problem, questions, or issue</b> <b>SLO 1: Recognize connections and relationships among ideas, data, and information.</b>	Explanation identifies relationships among all key elements that are integral to a comprehensive understanding of the problem, question or issue.	Explanation identifies relationships among most key elements that are integral to a comprehensive understanding of the problem, question or issue.	Explanation identifies relationships among some key elements that are integral to a comprehensive understanding of the problem, question or issue.	Explanation does not identify relationships among key elements of the issues that are integral to comprehensive understanding of the problem, question or issue.	Did not address the established standard.  Not applicable to the assignment.
<b>Evidence</b> <b>SLO 4: Construct arguments based on logical analysis of evidence and sound reasoning.</b>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation or evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. The viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation or evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. The viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation or evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. The viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation or evaluation. The viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.	Did not address the established standard.  Not applicable to the assignment.
<b>Influence of Context and Assumptions</b> <b>SLO 2: Identify assumptions by evaluating conflicting narratives and interpretations.</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	Did not address the established standard.  Not applicable to the assignment.



<p><b>Student's Position</b> (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) <b>SLO 5: Evaluate their ideas and the ideas of others, including identifying biases and fallacies, both logical and rhetorical.</b></p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated but is simplistic and obvious.</p>	<p>Did not address the established standard.  Not applicable to the assignment.</p>
<p><b>Processes and Solutions</b>  <b>SLO 3: Demonstrate proficiency in problem-solving strategies and skills by determining a process and solutions to a real-world problem.</b></p>	<p>Demonstrates exceptional proficiency in problem-solving, effectively applying a variety of strategies and skills to develop innovative solutions to complex real-world problems. Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve the problems but recognizes the consequences of the solution and can articulate the reason for choosing a solution.</p>	<p>Consistently demonstrates proficiency in problem-solving, effectively determining processes and solutions to real-world problems through systematic analysis, considering alternatives and creative thinking.</p>	<p>Demonstrates competence in problem-solving, developing a process however solutions lack innovation or fail to fully address all aspects of the real-world problem, few alternatives are considered.</p>	<p>Shows limited proficiency in problem-solving, vaguely developing processes and relying on simplistic approaches without considering any alternatives or failing to develop comprehensive solutions to real-world problems.</p>	<p>Did not address the established standard.  Not applicable to the assignment.</p>

