

## THE CONCEPT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND ITS ORIGINS

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the concept of critical thinking and its origins, highlighting its historical development from ancient philosophy to modern education. The main purpose of the study is to analyze how critical thinking has evolved, its theoretical foundations, and its role in fostering logical, analytical, and independent thinking skills. The article also discusses practical strategies for developing critical thinking, such as questioning techniques, comparative analysis, reflective practices, and interdisciplinary approaches. These methods aim to enhance students' and individuals' ability to evaluate information, make reasoned decisions, and solve complex problems effectively.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, historical development, logical reasoning, independent thinking, analytical skills, educational methods, interdisciplinary approach, reflection.

### **Аннотация**

В статье рассматривается понятие критического мышления и его происхождение, подчеркивается историческое развитие от античной философии до современного образования. Основная цель исследования – проанализировать эволюцию критического мышления, его теоретические основы и роль в формировании логического, аналитического и самостоятельного мышления. В работе также обсуждаются практические стратегии развития критического мышления, включая техники постановки вопросов, сравнительный анализ, рефлексия и междисциплинарный подход. Эти методы направлены на повышение способности студентов и людей в целом оценивать информацию, принимать обоснованные решения и эффективно решать сложные задачи.

**Ключевые слова:** критическое мышление, историческое развитие, логическое рассуждение, самостоятельное мышление, аналитические навыки, образовательные методы, междисциплинарный подход, рефлексия.

### **Annotatsiya**

Ushbu maqolada tanqidiy fikrlash tushunchasi va uning kelib chiqishi yoritilgan, qadimiy falsafadan zamonaviy ta'lim tizimigacha bo'lgan tarixiy rivojlanish ta'kidlangan. Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi tanqidiy fikrlashning shakllanishi, uning nazariy asoslari va mantiqiy, tahliliy hamda mustaqil fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishdagi roli tahlil qilinishidir. Maqolada tanqidiy fikrlashni rivojlantirishning amaliy strategiyalari, jumladan savol berish texnikasi, taqqoslash, refleksiya va ko'p fanli yondashuvlar muhokama qilinib, ma'lumotni baholash, asosli qaror qabul qilish va murakkab muammolarni samarali hal qilish ko'nikmalarini oshirishga yo'naltirilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** tanqidiy fikrlash, tarixiy rivojlanish, mantiqiy tafakkur, mustaqil fikrlash, tahliliy ko'nikmalar, ta'lim metodlari, ko'p fanli yondashuv, refleksiya.



Critical thinking is one of the essential aspects of human cognition. It involves not just receiving information, but analyzing, comparing, and drawing well-founded conclusions, guiding a conscious thinking process. In today's fast-paced world, where information flows rapidly and abundantly, individuals are prone to making incorrect conclusions or falling victim to manipulation. Therefore, critical thinking prevents passive acceptance of information and encourages conscious, reasoned thought. Its essence lies in helping people move away from automatically accepted stereotypes and analyze diverse perspectives. In this process, individuals evaluate available evidence, compare it, and arrive at the most logical conclusions. Moreover, critical thinking teaches individuals to defend their opinions while considering alternative viewpoints. Its main characteristics include logical and systematic reasoning, where every conclusion is based on evidence. Critical thinking is characterized by skepticism and scrutiny; it never accepts information automatically and allows for independent decision-making. Historically, critical thinking has developed over time. In ancient Greece, Socrates taught his students to think through questioning. His famous statement, "I know that I know nothing," reflects the importance of doubt and the desire to learn, which are integral to critical thinking. During the same period, Aristotle organized logical analysis and evidence systematically, laying the foundation for later scientific methods. In the Middle Ages, critical thinking developed primarily within religious and philosophical contexts, but the process of cultivating human reasoning and logical analysis of evidence continued. During the Renaissance, the development of science and art strengthened critical thinking, expanding human reasoning and creative approaches, enabling individuals to question stereotypes and accept new knowledge. By the 20th century, critical thinking became a central element in education. Schools and universities in the United States and Europe emphasized teaching students to think independently, solve problems, and develop skills to evaluate information. Today, critical thinking encompasses not only logical analysis but also creative and innovative approaches. Critical thinking has significant importance in various areas of life. In education, it teaches students to think independently, solve problems, and deeply understand knowledge. In daily life, it enables the analysis of information and protection against incorrect conclusions. In professional contexts, critical thinking helps solve complex situations and make strategic and timely decisions. Additionally, in social and political contexts, it protects against propaganda and manipulation. For instance, evaluating news solely based on headlines may lead to incorrect conclusions, while critical thinking encourages reading the full text, comparing evidence, and forming a reasoned judgment.

Several effective methods exist to develop critical thinking. Enhancing questioning skills—asking "Why?", "How?", and "What evidence?" for each piece of information—is crucial. Examining alternative perspectives, comparing and analyzing different viewpoints on a topic, drawing conclusions based on evidence, and avoiding logical errors are all important. Classroom discussions, debates, and workshops help cultivate critical thinking, providing students with skills in independent thinking, argumentation, and respecting others' opinions. Today, critical thinking is not only a tool for intellectual development and conscious decision-making but also a crucial element of education, science, and daily life. Through critical thinking, individuals are protected from incorrect conclusions, develop creative and logical approaches, and can make informed decisions amid the overwhelming flow of information. Developing critical thinking is essential for every individual because it not only ensures academic and professional success but also contributes to forming conscious and responsible citizens. Critical thinking



is more than just asking questions or criticizing; it is a process of logical, systematic, and conscious reasoning. It encourages individuals to analyze information, compare evidence, and justify their conclusions. In modern society, with rapidly spreading information, critical thinking protects people from incorrect conclusions, stereotypes, and manipulations. Therefore, it is essential not only in education but also in everyday life, professional activity, and social interactions. One of the key components of critical thinking is logical analysis. Examining information carefully, breaking it into components, and evaluating each part independently are integral to this process. Evaluation skills are equally important: checking facts and evidence, assessing their reliability, and comparing them with alternative perspectives to reach the most accurate conclusions. Critical thinking also involves recognizing alternative approaches and defending one's opinion. For example, analyzing various sources on a political or social issue and assessing their strengths and weaknesses allows individuals to reach informed and reasoned conclusions. Historically, critical thinking began in ancient Greek philosophy. Socrates taught students to carefully analyze their thoughts through the question-and-answer method. He guided individuals to acknowledge what they know and recognize what they do not, fostering skeptical and conscious thinking. Aristotle developed methods of reasoning based on logical sequences and evidence. During the Middle Ages, critical thinking evolved mainly in religious and philosophical contexts, while during the Renaissance, it was strengthened by developments in science and art. At this time, human cognition expanded, enabling the acceptance of new knowledge and criticism of stereotypes. By the 20th century, critical thinking held a central role in education, helping students think independently, solve problems, and evaluate information. Critical thinking applies in many areas of life. In professional settings, it enables analyzing complex situations, making strategic decisions, and finding innovative solutions. In daily life, it helps analyze information flows, avoid incorrect conclusions, and make informed decisions. It also protects against propaganda and manipulation in social and political contexts. Evaluating a news headline alone may lead to errors, while critical thinking encourages full-text analysis, evidence verification, and reasoned judgment. Effective methods to develop critical thinking include questioning, examining alternative viewpoints, drawing evidence-based conclusions, and avoiding logical errors. Through workshops, discussions, and debates, individuals enhance argumentation skills, defend their opinions, and respect others' perspectives. Another crucial aspect of critical thinking is analyzing information sources. In the era of the internet and social media, not all information is reliable. Critical thinking trains individuals to assess the credibility of sources, the reputation of authors, the validity of facts, and the timeliness of information, linking it closely to information literacy. Furthermore, critical thinking involves creative problem-solving, generating new solutions and innovative ideas. For instance, in business or scientific research, critical thinking allows analyzing resources, competitor activity, and market needs, leading to practical, logical, and effective decisions.

Critical thinking also plays a key role in ethical and social decision-making, taking into account not only the accuracy of information but also its social, economic, and moral consequences. For example, solving environmental issues through critical thinking helps identify the most effective and sustainable solutions for both individuals and society. Research shows that critical thinking is not limited to academic knowledge but also supports personal and professional success. Individuals with strong critical thinking skills make faster and more informed decisions in complex situations, make fewer mistakes, and actively generate new ideas. Additional methods for developing critical thinking include



reflection, which allows individuals to review their thoughts and decisions, identify errors, and reach better conclusions in future situations.

Critical thinking requires interdisciplinary approaches, combining knowledge from multiple fields to solve problems effectively. For example, in healthcare, diagnosing and developing treatments may involve biology, chemistry, psychology, and social sciences. Critical thinking analyzes and integrates these insights to find optimal solutions. It also enhances social interaction and teamwork, evaluating different opinions and perspectives to reach the best solution. Moreover, critical thinking fosters empathy, helping individuals understand and respect others' viewpoints. In conclusion, critical thinking is central to the development of human cognition and conscious decision-making. It goes beyond mere information reception, enabling analysis, comparison, evidence-based conclusions, and evaluation of alternative approaches. Historically, it began in ancient Greek philosophy, was reinforced during the Renaissance with the development of science and art, and became a core element of education in the 20th century. Today, critical thinking is widely applied in academic, professional, and everyday contexts, fostering logical, creative, and informed decision-making.

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