



Showing criticality in your writing.

As an academic writer, you are expected to be critical of the sources that you use. This essentially means questioning what you read and not necessarily agreeing with it just because the information has been published. Being critical can also mean looking for reasons why we should not just accept something as being correct or true. This can require you to identify problems with a writer's arguments or methods, or perhaps to refer to other people's criticisms of these. Constructive criticism goes beyond this by suggesting ways in which a piece of research or writing could be improved.

..... being against is not enough. We also need to develop habits of constructive thinking. Edward de Bono

Introducing questions, problems and limitations (theory)

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether
A serious weakness with this argument, however, is that
One of the limitations with this explanation is that it does not explain why... .
One criticism of much of the literature on X is that
The key problem with this explanation is that
The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.
However, there is an inconsistency with this argument.

Smith's argument relies too heavily on qualitative analysis of
It seems that Jones' understanding of the X framework is questionable.
Smith's interpretation overlooks much of the historical research
One major criticism of Smith's work is that
Many writers have challenged Jones' claim on the grounds that
X's analysis does not take account of nor does he examine

Introducing questions, problems and limitations (method/practice)

Another problem with this approach is that it fails to take X into account.
Perhaps the most serious disadvantage of this method is that
Difficulties arise, however, when an attempt is made to implement the policy.
Nevertheless, the strategy has not escaped criticism from governments, agencies and academics.
One major drawback of this approach is that
The main limitation of biosynthetic incorporation, however, is
However, this method of analysis has a number of limitations.
However, approaches of this kind carry with them various well known limitations.
All the studies reviewed so far, however, suffer from the fact that
However, there are limits to how far the idea of/concept of X can be taken.
However, such explanations tend to overlook the fact that
However, one of the problems with the instrument the researchers used to measure X was



However, all the previously mentioned methods suffer from some serious

limitations
weaknesses
disadvantages
drawbacks.

Identifying a study's weakness

(However,)	<p>the main weakness of the study is the failure to address how</p> <p>the study fails to consider the differing categories of damage that</p> <p>the research does not take into account pre-existing such as</p> <p>the author offers no explanation for the distinction between X and Y.</p> <p>Smith makes no attempt to differentiate between various different types of X.</p> <p>Jones fails to fully acknowledge the significance of</p> <p>the paper would appear to be over ambitious in its claims.</p> <p>the author overlooks the fact that X contributes to Y.</p> <p>what Smith fails to do is to draw a distinction between</p> <p>another weakness is that we are given no explanation of how</p> <p>Smith fails to fully define what</p> <p>no attempt was made to quantify the association between X and Y.</p>
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Offering constructive suggestions

Smith's paper			useful		included
Her conclusions	would have been	more	convincing	if he/she had	considered
The study	might have been	much more	interesting	if the author had	adopted
The findings		far more	persuasive		used
			original		

A more comprehensive study would include all the groups of

A better study would examine a large, randomly selected sample of societies with

A much more systematic approach would identify how X interacts with other variables that are believed to be linked to



Using evaluative adjectives to comment on research

<p>In his/her In their In this</p>	<p>excellent comprehensive detailed useful thorough groundbreaking timely important impressive</p> <p>-----</p> <p>limited small-scale exploratory</p>	<p>analysis (of X), examination (of X), study (of X), survey (of X), investigation (into Y),</p>	<p>Smith (2012) Jones et al. (2012)</p>	<p>found</p> <p>was/were able to show that</p> <p>concluded that</p>
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Highlighting inadequacies of previous studies

Most studies in the field of X have only focussed on

Most studies in X have only been carried out in a small number of areas.

The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.

The experimental data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about

Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they

However, few writers have been able to draw on any structured research into the opinions and attitudes of

The research to date has tended to focus on X rather than Y.

The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.

Researchers have not treated X in much detail.

Previous studies of X have not dealt with

However, these studies used non-validated methods to measure

Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether

However, much of the research up to now has been descriptive in nature

Although extensive research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which adequately covers

However, these results were based upon data from over 30 years ago and it is unclear if these differences still persist.

Introducing other people's criticisms

However, Jones (2003) points out that

Many analysts now argue that the strategy of X has not been successful. Jones (2003), for example, argues that

Non-government agencies are also very critical of the new policies.

The X theory has been / vigorously / strongly challenged in recent years by a number of writers.

Smith's analysis has been criticised by a number of writers. Jones (1993), for example, points out that

Smith's meta-analysis has been subjected to considerable criticism.

The most important of these criticisms is that Smith failed to note that

Jones (2003) is probably the best known critic of the X theory. He argues that



The latter point has been devastatingly critiqued by Jones (2003).
Critics have also argued that not only do social surveys provide an inaccurate measure of X, but the....
Critics question the ability of poststructuralist theory to provide
More recent arguments against X have been summarised by Smith and Jones (1982):
Jones (2003) is critical of the conclusions that Smith draws from his findings.