

Norwalk Public Schools Critical Thinker Map

This document outlines what a critical thinker looks like across grade-level bands, serving as a resource for educators and leaders. It aims to build clarity around the progression of critical thinking skills in students, grounded in child development research, critical thinking research, and academic standards.



Logically interprets, analyzes, and synthesizes information

Evaluates information for accuracy, credibility, and relevance

Reflects on and revises ideas using evidence

Pk-2

Reaches a conclusion based on details.
Identifies at least two perspectives.

Compare and contrasts two or more concrete objects or experiences.
Explains the patterns found in the comparison.

Distinguishes between a reliable source and an unreliable source.
Asks clarifying questions about another person's idea.

Understands feedback from teachers or peers and follows feedback to improve their work.
Uses evidence, like simple observations or counting to justify their answers or choices.

3-5

Uses evidence and considers multiple perspectives to develop, support, and communicate a logical argument/conclusion.

Compare and contrasts three or more objects or ideas.
Explains the patterns, trends, and relationships found in the analysis.

Compares, questions, and selects information from a range of sources of information and explains the reasons for their choosing.
Asks relevant and critical questions to identify possible errors.

Understands the important role of feedback to improve their work and ideas. Explains how they incorporated feedback into their revisions.
Uses evidence to support their reflections and revisions.

6-8

Develops generalizations/ideas/conclusions with reasons and evidence and considers multiple perspectives.
Addresses the counterclaims of the generalizations.

Compare and contrasts and sorts ideas/elements/information/data into multiple categories.
Explains the patterns, trends, relationships, and interconnectedness found in the analysis.

Questions and evaluates a range of information sources to recognize their values and limitations, and to make conclusions about their reliability.
Uses and justifies explicit criteria to question and to evaluate reasonableness in information/ideas, and identify errors in procedures and systems.

Seeks feedback to improve their work and ideas.
Uses evidence to justify revisions to their work and ideas.

9-12

Develops and defends valid arguments/hypotheses, conclusions/generalizations/solutions/insights with well-supported reasoning, evidence, and considers multiple perspectives.
Address the counterclaims and the limits of the generalizations.

Compare and contrasts and sorts ideas/elements/information/data into a variety of classification systems, with considerations of multiple perspectives.
Explains the patterns, trends, interconnectedness, and dynamic nature of cause-effect relationships found through the analysis.

Develops, justifies, and applies well-supported criteria to question and evaluate the reasonableness of information/ideas.
Identifies errors in a system based on an understanding of its structure.

Seeks feedback and engages in constructive dialogue about their work.
Defends thinking and articulates the reasons for their revisions using evidence.