THE CRITICAL THINKING TOOLKIT

Heard a claim? Think twice.

Eight skills for working out what to believe.

1 Fact or opinion?
CLAIM

Could I check this?

2 Who says so?
SOURCE

Who made this, and why?

3 Where's the proof?
EVIDENCE

How strong is the evidence?

4 Does it follow?
REASON

Could something else explain it?

5 Spot the trick
PERSUADE

What do they want me to do?

6 See both sides
POINT OF VIEW

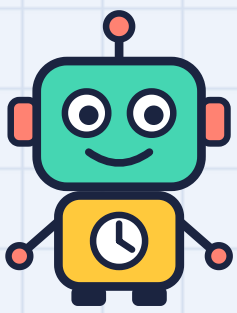
How would someone else see this?

7 Real or fake?
VERIFY

Have I checked before I share?

8 Change your mind
OPEN-MINDED

What would change my mind?



Ask good questions. Check the proof. Then make up your own mind.

1 THINKING SKILL ONE

Fact or opinion?

Claim say: KLAYM

Something a person says is true.

Fact

"A spider has eight legs."

You can check it.

CLUES

Numbers, dates, measurements, places.

Opinion

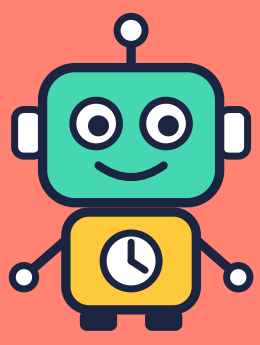
"Spiders are the scariest animals."

It is what someone thinks or feels.

CLUES

Best, worst, should, I think, everyone knows.

REMEMBER Something a person says is true is called a claim. Claims need checking.



ASK YOURSELF

Could I check this?

2 THINKING SKILL TWO

Who says so?

Source say: SORSS

Where a piece of information comes from.

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR ANY SOURCE

Who?
Who made this? Can you even tell?

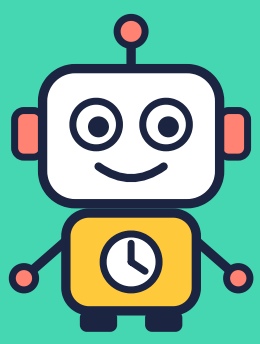
Know-how?
Do they really know the topic?

Why?
To teach, sell, entertain or persuade?

When?
Is it new enough to still be right?

WATCH OUT

Someone who is selling something has a reason to stretch the truth.



ASK YOURSELF

Who made this, and why?

3 THINKING SKILL THREE

Where's the proof?

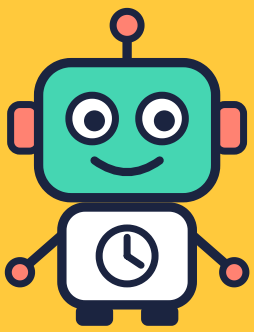
Evidence say: EV-ih-dunss

Information that helps show whether a claim is true.

THE EVIDENCE LADDER: WEAKEST TO STRONGEST

1. **Rumour**
   "I heard that..." Nobody knows who said it.
2. **One person's story**
   True for them. Maybe not for everyone.
3. **Several examples**
   Better, but it could still be a fluke.
4. **A fair test or lots of data**
   The strongest kind of evidence.

SAMPLE SIZE Ask 2 people and you learn about 2 people. Ask 200 and you learn about your school.



ASK YOURSELF

How strong is the evidence?

4 THINKING SKILL FOUR

Does it follow?

Reason

The 'because' that connects evidence to a claim.

HAPPENING TOGETHER IS NOT THE SAME AS CAUSING

Ice cream sales go up

It looks like this...

Sunburn goes up

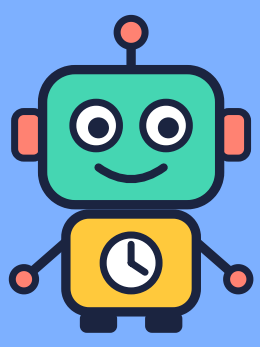
...causes this.

The hidden cause

A hot, sunny day causes both of them.

REMEMBER

Before you say "this caused that", ask what else could explain it.



ASK YOURSELF

Could something else explain it?

THINKING SKILL FIVE

Spot the trick

Persuade say: per-SWAYD

To try to get someone to believe or do something.

FIVE PERSUASION TRICKS

Everybody's doing it
"All the kids have one!"

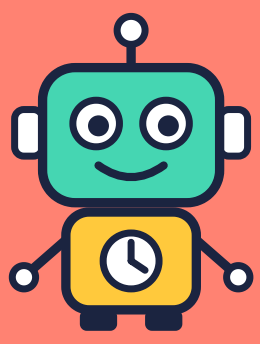
Famous face
A star says it is great.

Hurry, hurry!
"Today only!"

Empty numbers
"50% better!" Better than what?

Big promise
"You'll be the coolest kid." Can a drink really do that?

TOP TIP When you feel rushed, slow down. That is the trick working.



ASK YOURSELF

What do they want me to do?

6 THINKING SKILL SIX

See both sides

Point of view
How things look from where someone stands.

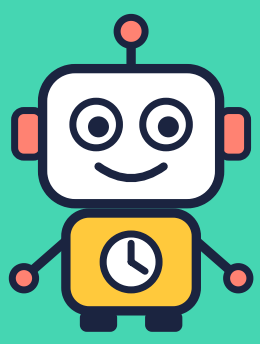
ONE QUESTION, TWO POINTS OF VIEW

"Should our school have a longer lunch break?"

A STUDENT MIGHT SAY
"Yes! More time to play and eat."

A TEACHER MIGHT SAY
"Then home time would be later."

WATCH OUT Bias means leaning one way before you look at the evidence. Everyone has some.



ASK YOURSELF
How would someone else see this?

7 THINKING SKILL SEVEN

Real or fake?

Verify say: VAIR-ih-fy

To check that something is true before you believe it or share it.

THE FOUR-STEP CHECK

1 Stop > 2 Look closer > 3 Check elsewhere > 4 Ask someone

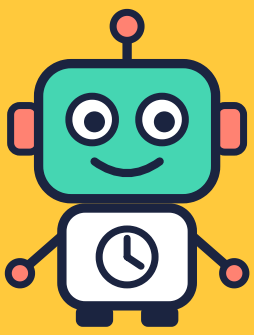
FOUR WARNING SIGNS

No source
You can't tell who made it.

Too amazing
Too good, or too shocking, to be true.

Only one place
Nobody else is reporting it.

Pushy
"Share this now before it's deleted!"



ASK YOURSELF

Have I checked before I share?

8 THINKING SKILL EIGHT

Change your mind

Open-minded

Willing to change what you think when you get better evidence.

HOW SURE ARE YOU?

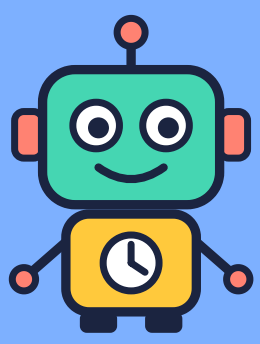
No idea > Maybe > Probably > Almost sure

"I used to think… Now I think…"

Saying this is a sign of good thinking, not of losing.

IN MATHS

Impossible, unlikely, even chance, likely, certain. Each new clue nudges you along the scale.



ASK YOURSELF

What would change my mind?