# Three Domains of Critical Reading: Questioning the Text

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|  | **Validity: On its own terms** | **Synthesis: In relation to others** | **Relevance: Usefulness to you** |
| **Context:** discipline/profession, authors, currency, bias | * When was it published?
* Where was it published?
* What profession or discipline are the authors?
* What else have they published – are they authoritative?
* Are there any vested interests which might bias research?
 | * Have others cited or drawn on this research?
* How influential has it been?
* Is it cutting edge/controversial or mainstream?
* Is this part of a debate and where does it sit?
 | * Are these authors coming at the issue from the same discipline perspective as you?
* What is your overall response to the article?
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| **What are they doing?** Research Question/Aims/Hypothesis | * Are the aims clearly stated? Are they vague?
* Is the research question etc valid or rest on bias/assumptions?
* Is the question interesting/significant?
 | * Is this a radically new area of research or a tweak or new angle on existing question or topic?
* How long have people been interested in this topic?
 | * How similar are their aims to your own? How does that affect your use of it?
* Is it still worth me doing my research?
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| **How did they do it?** Methods, Models and Materials | * Are any theories/models appropriate and accurately understood? Do they develop their own?
* Are the methods used for data gathering/interpretation appropriate?
* Is the data set well chosen?
 | * Are they developing a completely new method etc?
* Are the methods etc used standard and acceptable practice?
* Are they adapting or improving on previous methods etc?
 | * Does this help me justify my own choice of approach?
* Can I adapt or improve their method?
* Do I agree that this is an appropriate method for research like mine?
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| **How do they know?** Argument, evidence, logic and reasoning | * Is their interpretation and analysis flawed or does it make logical sense?
* Have they missed anything?
* Do the results actually mean what they say they mean?
 | * Do they use other literature appropriately to help interpret their findings?
* Do later scholars criticise them?
 | * Is there anything I should be watching out for when reading my own work critically?
* Is there anything I can point to in order to save me having to explain it in full?
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| **What do they say?** Findings and conclusions | * Are the conclusions actually related to their aims and results?
* Are the conclusions drawn proportionate to the evidence presented?
 | * Are their findings confirmed by other literature?
* Are their findings significant and novel, compared to other literature?
 | * Can I rely on their conclusions to build my own argument?
* Do I disagree with their conclusions to some extent? Does that help justify my research?
* Any gaps/missed opportunities to help justify my research?
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