

# **Critical Thinking & Decision Making Interview Questions And Answers Guide.**



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# Critical Thinking & Decision Making Job Interview Preparation Guide.

## Question # 1

Would you share your definition of critical thinking?

### Answer:-

First, since critical thinking can be defined in a number of different ways consistent with each other, we should not put a lot of weight on any one definition. Definitions are at best scaffolding for the mind. With this qualification in mind, here is a bit of scaffolding: critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you're thinking in order to make your thinking better.

Two things are crucial:

\* Critical thinking is not just thinking, but thinking which entails self-improvement.

\* This improvement comes from skill in using standards by which one appropriately assesses thinking. To put it briefly, it is self-improvement (in thinking) through standards (that assess thinking).

To think well is to impose discipline and restraint on our thinking-by means of intellectual standards - in order to raise our thinking to a level of "perfection" or quality that is not natural or likely in undisciplined, spontaneous thought. The dimension of critical thinking least understood is that of "intellectual standards." Most teachers were not taught how to assess thinking through standards; indeed, often the thinking of teachers themselves is very "undisciplined" and reflects a lack of internalized intellectual standards.

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## Question # 2

Could you give me an example of critical thinking or decision making?

### Answer:-

Certainly, one of the most important distinctions that teachers need to routinely make, and which takes disciplined thinking to make, is that between reasoning and subjective reaction.

If we are trying to foster quality thinking, we don't want students simply to assert things; we want them to try to reason things out on the basis of evidence and good reasons. Often, teachers are unclear about this basic difference. Many teachers are apt to take student writing or speech which is fluent and witty or glib and amusing as good thinking. They are often unclear about the constituents of good reasoning. Hence, even though a student may just be asserting things, not reasoning things out at all, if she is doing so with vivacity and flamboyance, teachers are apt to take this to be equivalent to good reasoning.

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## Question # 3

Could this possibly be a rare mistake, not representative of teacher knowledge?

### Answer:-

I don't think so. Let me suggest a way in which you could begin to test my contention. If you are familiar with any thinking skills programs, ask someone knowledgeable about it the "Where's the beef?" question.

Namely, "What intellectual standards does the program articulate and teach?" I think you will first find that the person is puzzled about what you mean. And then when you explain what you mean, I think you will find that the person is not able to articulate any such standards. Thinking skills programs without intellectual standards are tailor-made for mis-instruction. For example, one of the major programs asks teachers to encourage students to make inferences and use analogies, but is silent about how to teach students to assess the inferences they make and the strengths and weaknesses of the analogies they use. This misses the point. The idea is not to help students to make more inferences but to make sound ones, not to help students to come up with more analogies but with more useful and insightful ones.

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## Question # 4

But there are many areas of concern in instruction, not just one, not just critical thinking, but communication skills, problem solving, creative thinking, collaborative learning, self-esteem, and so forth. How are districts to deal with the full array of needs? How are they to do all of these rather than simply one, no matter how important that one may be?

### Answer:-

This is the key. Everything essential to education supports everything else essential to education. It is only when good things in education are viewed superficially and wrongly that they seem disconnected, a bunch of separate goals, a conglomeration of separate problems, like so many bee-bees in a bag. In fact, any well-conceived program in critical thinking requires the integration of all of the skills and abilities you mentioned above. Hence, critical thinking is not a set of skills separable from excellence in communication, problem solving, creative thinking, or collaborative learning, nor is it indifferent to one's sense of self-worth.



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### **Question # 5**

How do communication skills fit in critical thinking & decision making?

#### **Answer:-**

Some communication is surface communication, trivial communication--surface and trivial communication don't really require education. All of us can engage in small talk, can share gossip. And we don't require any intricate skills to do that fairly well. Where communication becomes part of our educational goal is in reading, writing, speaking and listening. These are the four modalities of communication which are essential to education and each of them is a mode of reasoning. Each of them involves problems. Each of them is shot through with critical thinking needs. Take the apparently simple matter of reading a book worth reading. The author has developed her thinking in the book, has taken some ideas and in some way represented those ideas in extended form. Our job as a reader is to translate the meaning of the author into meanings that we can understand.

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### **Question # 6**

How does self esteem fit in critical thinking & decision making?

#### **Answer:-**

Healthy self-esteem emerges from a justified sense of self-worth, just as self-worth emerges from competence, ability, and genuine success. If one simply feels good about oneself for no good reason, then one is either arrogant (which is surely not desirable) or, alternatively, has a dangerous sense of misplaced confidence. Teenagers, for example, sometimes think so well of themselves that they operate under the illusion that they can safely drive while drunk or safely take drugs. They often feel much too highly of their own competence and powers and are much too unaware of their limitations. To accurately sort out genuine self-worth from a false sense of self-esteem requires, yes you guessed it, critical thinking.

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### **Question # 7**

What about collaborative learning? How does it fit in critical thinking & decision making?

#### **Answer:-**

Collaborative learning is desirable only if grounded in disciplined critical thinking. Without critical thinking, collaborative learning is likely to become collaborative mis-learning. It is collective bad thinking in which the bad thinking being shared becomes validated. Remember, gossip is a form of collaborative learning; peer group indoctrination is a form of collaborative learning; mass hysteria is a form of speed collaborative learning (mass learning of a most undesirable kind). We learn prejudices collaboratively, social hates and fears collaboratively, stereotypes and narrowness of mind, collaboratively. If we don't put disciplined critical thinking into the heart and soul of the collaboration, we get the mode of collaboration which is antithetical to education, knowledge, and insight.

So there are a lot of important educational goals deeply tied into critical thinking just as critical thinking is deeply tied into them. Basically the problem in the schools is that we separate things, treat them in isolation and mistreat them as a result. We end up with a superficial representation, then, of each of the individual things that is essential to education, rather than seeing how each important good thing helps inform all the others.

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### **Question # 8**

One important aim of schooling should be to create a climate that evokes children's sense of wonder and inspires their imagination to soar. What can teachers do to "kindle" this spark and keep it alive in education?

#### **Answer:-**

First of all, we kill the child's curiosity, her desire to question deeply, by superficial didactic instruction. Young children continually ask why. Why this and why that? And why this other thing? But we soon shut that curiosity down with glib answers, answers to fend off rather than to respond to the logic of the question. In every field of knowledge, every answer generates more questions, so that the more we know the more we recognize we don't know. It is only people who have little knowledge who take their knowledge to be complete and entire. If we thought deeply about almost any of the answers which we glibly give to children, we would recognize that we don't really have a satisfactory answer to most of their questions. Many of our answers are no more than a repetition of what we as children heard from adults. We pass on the misconceptions of our parents and those of their parents. We say what we heard, not what we know. We rarely join the quest with our children. We rarely admit our ignorance, even to ourselves. Why does rain fall from the sky? Why is snow cold? What is electricity and how does it go through the wire? Why are people bad? Why does evil exist? Why is there war? Why did my dog have to die? Why do flowers bloom? Do we really have good answers to these questions?

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### **Question # 9**

It is important for our students to be productive members of the work-force. How can schools better prepare students to meet these challenges?

#### **Answer:-**

The fundamental characteristic of the world students now enter is ever-accelerating change; a world in which information is multiplying even as it is swiftly becoming obsolete and out of date; a world in which ideas are continually restructured, retested, and rethought; where one cannot survive with simply one way of thinking; where one must continually adapt one's thinking to the thinking of others; where one must respect the need for accuracy and precision and meticulousness; a world in which job skills must continually be upgraded and perfected - even transformed. We have never had to face such a world before. Education has never before had to prepare students for such dynamic flux, unpredictability, and complexity for such ferment, tumult, and disarray.

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### **Question # 10**

Are we willing to learn new concepts and ideas?

#### **Answer:-**

These are profound challenges to the profession. They call upon us to do what no previous generation of teachers was ever called upon to do. Those of us willing to pay the price will yet have to teach side by side with teachers unwilling to pay the price. This will make our job even more difficult, but not less exciting, not less important, not less rewarding. Critical thinking is the heart of well-conceived educational reform and restructuring, because it is at the heart of the changes of the 21st Century. Let us hope that enough of us will have the fortitude and vision to grasp this reality and transform our lives and our schools accordingly.



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### **Question # 11**

National standards will result in national accountability. What is your vision for the future?

#### **Answer:-**

Most of the national assessment we have done thus far is based on lower-order learning and thinking. It has focused on what might be called surface knowledge. It has rewarded the kind of thinking that lends itself to multiple choice machine-graded assessment. We now recognize that the assessment of the future must focus on higher - not lower - order thinking; that it must assess more reasoning than recall; that it must assess authentic performances, students engaged in bona fide intellectual work.

Our problem is in designing and implementing such assessment. In November of this last year, Gerald Nosich and I developed and presented, at the request of the Department of Education, a model for the national assessment of higher order thinking. At a follow-up meeting of critical thinking's problem-solving, communication, and testing scholars and practitioners, it was almost unanimously agreed that it is possible to assess higher-order thinking on a national scale. It was clear from the commitments of the departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce that such an assessment is in the cards.

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### **Question # 12**

Tell me an occasion where you had to make a decision on your own? Were you happy with your decision making process?

#### **Answer:-**

Candidate should show that they can think logically and wisely to arrive at a decision; Has a balanced thinking process; are not too gentle or too hasty in decision making process.

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### **Question # 13**

Tell me how do you react in a situation where you need to take an immediate decision? What process will you follow for decision making in such a critical situation?

#### **Answer:-**

Candidate should show that they have patience and the good judgment to identify problems first, then prioritize, and plan well in solving problems.

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### **Question # 14**

Tell me have you ever faced a situation when you had to take a decision, which did not fall within in your area of responsibility? What decision did you make and how?

#### **Answer:-**

Candidate's answer should show that they know how to take responsibility, that they can make a decision to meet the needs of clients, and that they can make innovative decisions.

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### **Question # 15**

Tell me do you always make decisions on your own without the help of others? In which situations do you seek other's help for decision-making?

#### **Answer:-**

Candidate should show that they have the presence of mind and sensibility to judge any situation and make a decision independently, if required. You should hear that in critical situation candidate will seek advice and guidance to reach correct decision.

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### **Question # 16**

Tell me have you ever tried to delay any decision-making? What were the consequences of this on both your company and customers?

#### **Answer:-**

You want to hear that the applicant does not like to delay decision-making, they can make quick decisions, and they can implement decisions in a timely manner.

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### **Question # 17**

Give an example of a situation in which you had to make a decision when you didn't have all facts available. What process do you follow for making decisions for these different circumstances and were you satisfied with the results?

#### **Answer:-**

- \* Using available info - Based his process on the information to hand.
- \* Analyzing - Knows how to break complex issues into components.
- \* Critical Thinking - Considers the outcomes of varying course of actions.
- \* Investigating - Can take conclusions from different sources of data.
- \* Acting - Can make decisions without complete info. Doesn't hesitate to act and able to make sound decision patiently, but in a timely manner.
- \* Responsibility - Does not put off making a decision to avoid conflict, 'getting it wrong'. Not afraid to take risks to come to a solution. Doesn't delay actions because of outcomes or reactions.
- \* Studding - Demonstrate a lesson learned ability in order to progress.

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### **Question # 18**

what occasions do you recognize that you need other's help? Do you always use established procedures to ensure that the correct action is taken?

**Answer:-**

It is OK to tell that you ask for advice and information when you are unable to get it by yourself as you are always looking for the best decision.

You also have to talk about your ability to take hard decisions (sometimes initiatives or creative ones) independently if required. You seek for being practical when assessing multiple, complex or contradictory data in order to reach the right decision.

Show that you understand Cause and Effect and during the decision-making process you are able to evaluate the relationship between short-term consequences and long-term gains.

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**Question # 19**

How do you go ahead when it comes to solving a problem?

**Answer:-**

- \* Writing down ideas about possible causes
- \* Looking for related causes in order to group together symptoms of bigger problems
- \* Studying these groups of causes
- \* The real cause (to the problem in question) becomes readily apparent
- \* Devising a route to getting a resolution

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**Question # 20**

Tell me are you a good decision maker?

**Answer:-**

You have to realize that in reality different forms of decisions are ok for different cases. In an interview, it is your time to demonstrate that you have a balanced thinking process and, if required, you are able to make quality decisions assertively but never too impulsively.

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**Question # 21**

How we made Decisions in different ways?

**Answer:-**

Obviously, there are not right or wrong answers to the questions above. However, when asked about similar behaviors in an interview, you can emphasize the qualities that enter into your decision-making.

- \* Critical thinkers do not base decisions on emotion or bias
- \* They take the time to digest each piece of information
- \* They give differing viewpoints equal weight and consideration
- \* They compare the decision to related ones in the past
- \* They reject phrases like "that's the way it's always been" or "I heard somewhere that."

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**Question # 22**

What good is curiosity if we don't know what to do next or how to satisfy it?

**Answer:-**

We can create the environment necessary to the discipline, power, joy, and work of critical thinking only by modeling it before and with our students. They must see our minds at work. Our minds must stimulate theirs with questions and yet further question; questions that probe information and experience; questions that call for reasons and evidence; questions that lead students to examine interpretations and conclusions, pursuing their basis in fact and experience; questions that help students to discover their assumptions, questions that stimulate students to follow out the implications of their thought, to test their ideas, to take their ideas apart, to challenge their ideas, to take their ideas seriously. It is in the totality of this intellectually rigorous atmosphere that natural curiosity thrives.

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**Question # 23**

How does curiosity fit in with critical thinking?

**Answer:-**

To flourish, curiosity must evolve into disciplined inquiry and reflection. Left to itself it will soar like a kite without a tail, that is, right into the ground! Intellectual curiosity is an important trait of mind, but it requires a family of other traits to fulfill it. It requires intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, and faith in reason. After all, intellectual curiosity is not a thing in itself - valuable in itself and for itself. It is valuable because it can lead to knowledge, understanding, and insight; because it can help broaden, deepen, sharpen our minds, making us better, more humane, more richly endowed persons.

To reach these ends, the mind must be more than curious, it must be willing to work, willing to suffer through confusion and frustration, willing to face limitations and overcome obstacles, open to the views of others, and willing to entertain ideas that many people find threatening. That is, there is no point in our trying to model and encourage curiosity, if we are not willing to foster an environment in which the minds of our students can learn the value and pain of hard intellectual work. We do our students a disservice if we imply that all we need is unbridled curiosity, that with it alone knowledge comes to us with blissful ease in an atmosphere of fun, fun, fun.

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