

HEIghten® Critical Thinking Assessment

Performance Level Descriptions

Advanced

A typical student at the advanced level has demonstrated the ability to:

- extrapolate implications from multiple pieces of information and argumentation.
- accurately recognize descriptions of the logic of complexly structured arguments.
- employ multistep reasoning to identify hidden assumptions.
- employ multistep reasoning to identify evidence that directly or indirectly supports or undermines a claim, or specify additional information needed in order to resolve a point.
- identify subtle appeals to emotion and revisions to an argument that would reduce such appeals.
- distinguish information that may be peripherally or generally relevant to assertions/arguments from information that is directly on-point.
- employ multistep reasoning to distinguish causation from correlation, and identify possible alternative causes or explanations.
- engage in reasoning that involves complex interactions among multiple claims, arguments or pieces of information.
- identify abstract concepts or principles that are implicitly instantiated in an argument.
- identify the most accurate among competing descriptions of the logical relationships between assertions/arguments and supporting (or irrelevant or undermining) information, even when the required distinctions are subtle or complex.

Proficient

A typical student at the proficient level has demonstrated the ability to:

- make inferential connections between points whose relationship is not explicitly given.
- follow the logic of an argument whose structure is not fully explicit.
- identify implicit assumptions.
- identify evidence that directly or indirectly supports or undermines a claim or specify additional information needed in order to resolve a point.
- identify appeals to emotion and revisions to an argument that would reduce such appeals.
- distinguish information that is relevant to assertions or arguments from irrelevant information.
- distinguish causation from correlation, and identify possible alternative causes or explanations.

- engage in reasoning that involves interactions among multiple claims, arguments or pieces of information.
- identify abstract concepts or principles that are instantiated in an argument.
- identify the most accurate among competing descriptions of the logical relationships between assertions/arguments and supporting (or irrelevant or undermining) information.

Developing

A typical student at the developing level may sometimes:

- make inferential connections between two explicitly related points.
- follow the logic of an explicitly structured argument.
- identify explicit assumptions.
- identify evidence that directly supports or undermines a claim.
- identify clear appeals to emotion.
- mistake evidence that is broadly related to a topic for evidence that is relevant to a specific assertion about the topic.
- have difficulty distinguishing causation from correlation or identifying alternative explanations.
- have difficulty understanding or evaluating interactions among multiple claims, arguments or pieces of evidence.
- have difficulty reasoning about abstract concepts or principles.
- have difficulty identifying the most accurate among competing descriptions of the logical relationships between assertions/arguments and supporting (or irrelevant or undermining) information.