

Critical thinking versus evaluation (by maybenotoday#3106)

I feel like I need to clarify this a lot, so I will: **critical thinking is not the same as evaluation**. Although you can often use the terms interchangeably, there is usually a subtle distinction between the two. You *could*, for instance, argue that evaluation is a *type* of critical thinking, but ultimately, the two are not the same.

Evaluation refers to the appraisal of the relevant strengths and weaknesses of the subject matter at hand, *with respect to one another*. When you evaluate, you are essentially conducting a cost-benefit analysis of sorts (obviously, this isn't the best analogy, but it'll work until I get around to refining this later). Do the pros outweigh the cons *in the relevant context in which you are evaluating the subject at hand*?

Critical thinking refers to the process of making a rational, unbiased judgement of the subject matter at hand in order to form a conclusion, often without consideration of context. Often, critical thinking utilises a more holistic approach relative to evaluation. When you think critically, you are not just appraising the subject at hand, or looking at its strengths and weaknesses relative to one another. You are forming a judgement about the subject *as a whole*, with links to the context in which you are discussing it.

TL;DR

Evaluation is the appraisal of a particular issue *with respect to itself*, whereas critical thinking is the appraisal of a particular issue *with respect to the relevant context and overarching discussion*.