

Checklist for Evaluating a Text

Example only

Davis & Slobodkin,

Aspect	Yes/no	Comments/examples
1. The writer's own position on the issue is clear.	Yes	'Although ecology plays a central and essential role in the implementation of restoration projects, we believe that defining restoration goals and objectives is fundamentally a value-based, not scientific, activity.'
2. It is clear what the reasons are for the writer's point of view.	No	Ecology is a science, but ecological restoration is a practice, or, at best, an applied science. It is inaccurate to portray ecological restoration as a science.
3. The writer's conclusion is clear and based on evidence that he/she has presented.	Yes	The field of ecological restoration should embrace the fact that the definition of its goals is a value-based social enterprise.
4. Reasons are presented in a logical order, as a line of reasoning.	Yes	Attributes such as "health" and "integrity" can be applied to entities that have been directly shaped by evolution, e.g. organisms. Ecosystems are not like organisms and so such metaphors cannot be applied to them. Rather than setting goals to restore something because there are scientific reasons to do so, practitioners should acknowledge that they restore because of a value-based assessment.
5. The argument is well structured and easy to follow.	Yes	4 or 5 key points
6. Reasons are clearly linked to one another and to the conclusion.	Yes	
7. All the text is relevant to the issue at hand.	Yes	
8. The main reasons and key points stand out clearly to the reader.	Yes	1. The goals of ecological restoration are derived from values, not science. 2. Science comes in during the implementation phase of a project. 3. It is misleading to use metaphors such as health and integrity with a contested term such as ecosystem. 4. Ecological restoration is more like architecture and 'ecological architecture' is a more apt characterization of its work.
9. The writer makes good use of other people's research as supporting evidence to strengthen the argument.	Yes	With respect to the paradigms and metaphors used in ecological restoration, cites other scientists and philosophers, as well as practitioners.
10. The writer makes a reasoned evaluation of other people's views, especially those that contradict his or her own point of view.	Unsure	May be somewhat selective in choice of references (who isn't?) Would need to conduct additional research on the history of this debate.
11. The writer provides references in the text when introducing other people's ideas.	Yes	

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12. The writer provides a list of references at the end of the article.	Yes	
13. The writing contains inconsistencies.	No	
14. The writer's beliefs or self-interests distort the argument.	Unsure	Would need to conduct additional research on the history of this debate.

1. Checklist adapted from Cottrell, Stella. (2005). *Critical thinking skills*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 190.