

**Checklist for Evaluating a Text**  
**Example only**  
**Winterhalder, Clewell & Aronson<sub>1</sub>**

Aspect	Yes/no	Comments/examples
1. The writer's own position on the issue is clear.	Yes	D & S are incorrect to take positions that contradict those expressed in the SER Primer. Ecological science has a broader role in restoration than merely in its implementation.
2. It is clear what the reasons are for the writer's point of view.	Yes	Authors have written the Primer and believe its contents are accurate.
3. The writer's conclusion is clear and based on evidence that he/she has presented.	No	Author's conclusion addresses only one of their objections to D & S's piece. There are more objections in the body of their piece than in the conclusion.
4. Reasons are presented in a logical order, as a line of reasoning.	Yes	Authors discuss values versus science, ecosystems, use of health and integrity, definition of ecological restoration.
5. The argument is well structured and easy to follow.	Yes	Authors deal with each item in turn.
6. Reasons are clearly linked to one another and to the conclusion.	No	Authors admit up front they regard the contention that the goals of ecological restoration are value- rather than scientifically-based to be a non-issue. Other issues they discuss seem to come from a defensive posture of their own.
7. All the text is relevant to the issue at hand.	No	The authors spend much time justifying and explaining the inclusion of certain concepts in the Primer.
8. The main reasons and key points stand out clearly to the reader.	Yes	1. Authors deny that science informs ecological restoration only in the implementation phase – they contend the field relies on a body of science from start to finish. 2. D & S are incorrect to contest the use of terms such as ecosystem, health and integrity. 3. They object to the characterization of ecological restoration as being similar to architecture.
9. The writer makes good use of other people's research as supporting evidence to strengthen the argument.	Yes	Authors recommend a more 'balanced' choice of writers.
10. The writer makes a reasoned evaluation of other people's views, especially those that contradict his or her own point of view.	Unsure	Not sure of the significance of D & S's citing evolutionary biologists like Diamond – more research needed to understand W,C,& A's objections.
11. The writer provides references in the text when introducing other people's ideas.	Yes	Example only
12. The writer provides a list of references at the end of the article.	Yes	
13. The writing contains inconsistencies.	No	

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14. The writer's beliefs or self-interests distort the argument.	Unsure	The tone of the piece is defensive and slightly derogatory.
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1. Checklist adapted from Cottrell, Stella. (2005). *Critical thinking skills*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 190.

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Educational unit created (except where noted) and contributed by Jan Coe. 11/2006