



Critical thinking on social media



A definition

Critical thinking can be defined as the ability to determine relevant information, evaluate its credibility, and draw reasonable conclusions about what one should believe or do (Paulsen, V.H., Kolstø, S.D., 2022). On social media, it is also called “Media Literacy”. It is the ability to understand the messages different media are spreading and question what you consume on the Internet.



Why is this important?

Everyone can post whatever they want on social media. The positive aspect is that you can find lots of different visions and points of view on social media. It is great to see different angles and to confront to people you disagree with. However, it is important to improve your critical thinking to avoid believing everything you can see on social media or posting things that you would regret or could put you in a difficult position.



Tips and tricks

- ➔ The first thing to improve your critical thinking and social media literacy is to know what you are dealing with. Remember that you are the product on social media, as it is completely free. It means that the platform’s goal is to keep you online for as long as possible.
- ➔ Always check who is posting and what are their sources to understand their point of view and intention. You can ask yourself questions such as “who is it for?”, “is it selling something?”, and “who does it benefit to?”. Inform yourself on a topic from different sources to form your own opinion.
- ➔ You must balance questioning everything and believing everything you see on social media. Being too alarmist is also an obstacle to critical thinking.



Useful resources and tools



This [resource sheet](#) by SALTO introduces these concepts, providing some tools and a short video to explain why media literacy and critical thinking is important.



SAFETY RESOURCES



On the same platform, there is another [resource sheet](#) specific, “Critical Thinking”, explaining in more detail the skill of critical thinking and giving some resources to extend your knowledge.



SALTO platform provides another [resource sheet](#) on “Media and Information Literacy”. It provides some tools and resources on the topic and explains why this is an important skill to develop online.



[Social Media Literacy Erasmus+ project](#) was developed to teach social media literacy to students. You can find tools and resources on their project website.