

# Activity . . . . . ➔ 63

## Analysing and critiquing

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Work together in pairs to find a research paper from an academic journal that is relevant to this course. Once you have found a suitable paper, read through it, on an individual basis. As you read, answer the following questions. When you have done this, get back together with your partner to discuss, compare and contrast your answers.

1. Who is the author(s) of the paper?
2. Why do you think the author(s) has decided to publish this paper?
3. Has the author(s) included a relevant background literature review? Is this adequate? Has other research on this topic been explained clearly?
4. Is there a good, clear description of how the research was carried out? Can you understand how the research was carried out, from the description given?
5. Has the author(s) included everything you need to know about how the research was carried out? Do you think any information is missing?
6. Has bias been introduced into any of the information presented? Has the researcher(s) highlighted, acknowledged and taken steps to reduce or eliminate any bias that might be present in the research process?
7. Is there anything in the paper that you do not understand? If so, what do you think the author(s) should have done to make it clearer?
8. Are all interpretations/conclusions backed up by evidence? Has the author(s) jumped to conclusions or made assumptions that are not backed up by evidence?
9. Can you understand the interpretations/findings presented in the paper? Has the author(s) explained the results in a clear and succinct way? If not, what could be done better?
10. Are you convinced by the interpretations/conclusions? Why?
11. Are all sources acknowledged and referenced properly?
12. Is the paper well-structured and well-written? Can you make any suggestions for improvement?
13. Is the paper useful to other researchers and/or the general public? Does it tell us something important? If so, what does it tell us?
14. Has the importance/impact of the research been demonstrated?

Keep a copy of these questions as you will find it useful to refer back to them when you analyse and critique research papers as your course progresses and when you begin to write up your own research for your dissertation.

**Learning outcome:** By the end of this activity you will have a greater understanding of how to analyse and critique academic papers and will feel more confident and knowledgeable about undertaking these tasks as your course progresses.