

The SEE-I of  
Intellectual Standards

I have chosen to create a SEE-I for the intellectual standards of clearness, relevance, sufficiency and depth and breadth. I feel these four standards are the most applicable to English Language Arts.

**Clearness:**

*Statement:* Thinking is considered clear when it is easily understood.

*Elaborate:* Thinking clearly is the ability to clear up any discrepancies, you may elaborate on your ideas and you may create an analogy of your thought. To think clearly is to have others recognize the process you went through to arrive at your understanding. If your thinking is clear others may agree or disagree without having to ask clarifying questions.

*Example:* An example of clear thinking is seeing a ball bounce into the street and immediately slowing down, because clearly a child will be chasing that ball out onto the street.

*Illustration:* You are driving down the highway and suddenly you are engulfed in a fog so thick you can barely see the end of your vehicle. It is suddenly dangerous to drive because you cannot see where you are going. You might make incorrect assumptions about the speed you are driving and you may not see obstacles until it is too late. You might not be able to see your turn and you may miss your destination. It is important to think clearly so that you do not miss the point of your thinking.

**Relevance:**

*Statement:* Thinking can be considered relevant if it is directly related to the inquiry question.

*Elaborate:* Relevance should be considered a relative term as everything has relevance to something. In terms of critical thinking, the information must pertain to the question at issue if it is to be considered relevant. Relevance of information allows for significant factors to be considered and ensures that the focus of the questioning stays central to the question at hand. If thoughts and questions focus on relevance in order to arrive at a well reasoned, working conclusion.

*Example:* An example of relevance is to determine if the wind is blowing before trying to fly a kite. In order to fly a kite you require wind, therefore a relevant question to ask would be, “Is the wind blowing?”

*Illustration:* Consider the concept of allowing students to use their cellular phones in class. All students have a cellular phone, and most of them have it on their person at all times. The usage of a cellular phone has become a permanent fixture in the hand of a teenager, it is irrelevant to consider that students would not bring a cellular phone to school.

**Sufficiency:**

*Statement:* The amount of information required to resolve the question-at-issue.

*Elaboration:* In critical thinking, sufficiency is thought of in terms of the amount of information required to arrive at a working conclusion. The amount of information is considered sufficient if the question-at-issue.

*Example:* The dark clouds forming in the sky were enough information to tell us there was a storm headed our way.

*Illustration:* It is Monday morning, and Charles has hit the snooze button three times. He is late again. He rushes around the kitchen throwing together his breakfast of cereal. He grabs the milk out of the fridge and pours it on his cereal. He proceeds to wolf down his first spoonful, it is when the spoon is poised to enter his mouth for a second time that he realizes something is terribly wrong. He rushes to the garbage and spits out the mouthful of cereal. He picks up the milk and notices that it has expired. In his rush, he did not consider sufficiently the possibility of the milk being sour. He did not take a look at the expiry date or smell the milk to give himself the sufficient evidence to arrive at the conclusion the his milk was sour.

## **Depth and Breadth**

*Statement:* The depth and breadth standard of critical thinking is meant to have the thinker consider how involved and well-rounded their questioning of the issue-in-question is.

*Elaboration:* Depth and breadth of a critical inquiry question is the ability to recognize that in order to come to a well reasoned, working conclusion part of the process must include an awareness of more than just a superficial look at the issue. A critical thinker is charged with looking at the issue from other perspectives, as well as the not so obvious complexities of the issue. This step of reasoning should also address any issues with the issue itself or how the issue is being studied.

*Example:* An example of considering the depth and breadth of an issue would be completing a lot of research when buying a new car, instead of buying a Ford Escape because your dad is a “Ford man.”

*Illustration:* Sarah wanted to have a baby, she needed someone to call her “Mom.” She thought about snuggling the sleeping baby and the cooing a newborn. So, Sarah had a baby. The baby was a colicky baby. He cried for hours on end at night, he would not nap for longer than twenty minutes at a time and only Sarah could console him. Her husband tried, but the child would only calm down for Sarah. Sarah got what she wanted; a baby that needed her, but she did not consider all possibilities of parenting, she did not look past the surface of a cute little baby. And this was only the beginning!