

C.L.A.W. Academy

Critical Thinking Puzzle Worksheet

Analyzing Evidence and Making Smart Choices

Critical thinking means looking at information carefully, asking good questions, and making smart decisions based on evidence. These puzzles will help you practice analyzing situations and thinking logically!

Part 1: Detective Work

Puzzle 1: The Missing Cookies

Mom baked 12 cookies and left them on the counter. When she came back, only 8 cookies were left. She found these clues:

- The family dog was sleeping in the backyard the whole time
- Your little brother has chocolate on his face
- The cookie jar is on a high shelf he cannot reach
- Your sister just got home from soccer practice

What do you think happened? Use the evidence to explain your reasoning.

Part 2: Analyzing Information

Puzzle 2: The Science Fair Project

Three students are trying to figure out which plant food works best. Here are their results after 2 weeks:

- Plant A (Brand X): Grew 3 inches, leaves are green
- Plant B (Brand Y): Grew 5 inches, leaves are yellow
- Plant C (No food): Grew 2 inches, leaves are green

Which plant food would you recommend? Explain your thinking. What other information might you want to know?

Part 3: Problem Solving

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Puzzle 3: The Fair Game

You and your friend want to decide who goes first in a game. Your friend suggests flipping a coin, but you do not have a coin. What are three other fair ways you could decide? Explain why each method is fair.

Part 4: Questioning Claims

Puzzle 4: Evaluating a Claim

You read an article that says: "Kids who eat breakfast every day get better grades in school." What questions would you ask before believing this claim? Think about what other factors might affect grades. List at least three important questions.

Part 5: Logical Reasoning

Puzzle 5: Find the Pattern

Look at this sequence: 2, 5, 11, 23, 47, ? What number comes next? Explain the pattern you discovered and show your work.

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Answer Guide for Parents & Educators

Puzzle 1

The brother likely ate the cookies (chocolate on face is evidence). However, encourage discussion about how he reached the high shelf - maybe he used a chair? This teaches children to look for evidence and consider multiple possibilities.

Puzzle 2

Brand X is better because the plant is healthy (green leaves) even though it grew less. Brand Y made the plant grow faster but the yellow leaves suggest the plant is unhealthy. This teaches that more is not always better - quality matters.

Puzzle 3

Fair methods include: rock-paper-scissors, rolling dice (highest number wins), drawing straws, or taking turns (you go first this time, I go first next time). Each is fair because both players have equal chances.

Puzzle 4

Important questions: Did they study more? Do they get more sleep? What kind of breakfast? How many kids were studied? What grades did they get before eating breakfast? This teaches correlation vs. causation.

Puzzle 5

The pattern is: double the previous number and add 1. ($2 \times 2 + 1 = 5$, $5 \times 2 + 1 = 11$, $11 \times 2 + 1 = 23$, $23 \times 2 + 1 = 47$, $47 \times 2 + 1 = 95$). Answer: 95. This teaches pattern recognition and mathematical reasoning.

Tips for Encouraging Critical Thinking

- Ask Open-Ended Questions

Instead of yes/no questions, ask "Why do you think that?" or "What evidence supports your idea?" to encourage deeper thinking.

- Encourage Multiple Solutions

Show children that many problems have more than one right answer. Ask "What is another way we could solve this?"

- Model Your Thinking Process

Think out loud when solving problems so children can hear how you analyze information and make decisions.

- Celebrate Mistakes

Frame errors as learning opportunities. Ask "What can we learn from this?" instead of focusing on being right or wrong.

- Practice Everyday

Use daily situations as teaching moments. At the grocery store: "Which is a better deal?" During movies: "What do you think will happen next? Why?"