

Introduction to the Second Edition

Thinking Critically: World Issues for Reading, Writing, and Research, Second Edition, is designed for students who want to improve their general fluency in English while expanding their knowledge of major issues in the news in the United States and abroad. It contains authentic articles from online news sites, magazines, journals, and newspapers. These articles, which include factual news reports as well as blogs and essays, are challenging but accessible. Although many topics remain the same from the prior edition, all 34 readings are new. Most readings were written in 2012 or 2013, but they raise issues that are likely to remain relevant into the foreseeable future. Each chapter has two or three readings, a glossary of difficult words, discussion questions, research and writing activities, a debate or a role play, a critical thinking task, and lists of suggested websites and readings.

Through reading, talking, and writing about news from around the world, students will become familiar with a variety of news media and journalistic approaches. Thus, they will learn to look at the media from a knowledgeable perspective as they discuss and assess the content, style, and tone of the readings. Furthermore, students will gain confidence in using new vocabulary words when speaking and writing about contemporary concerns. Finally, students are challenged to think critically about social, economic, and political issues. They will analyze and synthesize information, draw inferences, form interpretations, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of public policies.

The overall goals of this textbook are to improve linguistic competence, critical thinking, and awareness of global issues. The specific objectives of this textbook are:

- to increase competence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- to strengthen analytical ability
- to enhance skills in online research
- to improve ability to guess the meaning of words from the context
- to enlarge productive vocabulary
- to expand knowledge of contemporary issues.

As the title indicates, a primary objective of *Thinking Critically* is to improve all aspects of this essential skill, which includes these intellectual tasks: analysis, synthesis, inference, interpretation, comparison, contrast, problem-solving, decision-making, and formulation and justification of opinion. The discussion questions and activities contain a variety of questions that test not only reading comprehension but also critical thinking.

A second important objective is vocabulary expansion. For that reason, a glossary is included after each reading with the form of the word as it appears in the reading. These glossed words may appear more than once in the book because chapters in the book can be used in any order. The glossary contains the words that students need to understand the reading. Students are asked to use some of these words in the **Reaction Writing** task.

This textbook actively involves students in the language learning process. Through a combination of group work and individual assignments, students will acquire these practical skills:

- reading and discussing authentic articles from various news sources
- doing research on the Internet
- writing documents in academic or business style (APA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian)
- debating a controversial issue
- conducting a public opinion poll
- giving oral presentations
- building a news file of current articles on relevant issues
- performing role plays of realistic scenarios
- analyzing a policy issue.

Thinking Critically presents a cross-section of themes and issues central to our experience today. Most of the readings raise questions rather than offering answers, and the discussion questions encourage readers to consider a topic from different points of view. The **Thinking about It** task calls on students' ability to evaluate a complex issue with objectivity and to propose a realistic approach, making this textbook good preparation for academic courses that require students to use critical-thinking skills to express opinions, both orally and in writing. Because the text focuses on contemporary issues and public policies of concern to citizens in a global society, it is designed to inspire lively discussions and help shape an interactive learning environment.