# Descriptive writing vs Critical writing

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| **Descriptive writing** | **Critical writing** |
| States what happens | Identifies the significance of events |
| States what something is like | Evaluates strengths and weaknesses |
| Explains what a theory says | Shows why a theory is relevant or suitable |
| Explains how something works | Indicates why something will work (better or best) |
| Notes the methods used | Identifies how or why a method is appropriate or suitable |
| Says when something occurred | Identifies why that timing is of importance |
| States the different components | Weighs up the importance of the component parts |
| States options | Gives reasons for selecting each option |
| Lists details | Evaluates the relative significance of details |
| Lists in any order | Structures information in order of importance |
| States links between items | Shows the relevance of links between items |
| Gives information | Draws conclusions |
| Cites references | Engages with and evaluates other authors’ work |

Adapted from Stella Cottrell (2013) *The study skills handbook*. 4th ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 198.

# Critical Paragraphs

## (Remember to P.E.E.)

***Explain*** *the significance of your evidence. Articulate* ***why*** *it matters and use it to support your* ***argument****.*

## What next?

1. See if you can apply these ideas in our [Critical Paragraphs Worksheet](https://yorksj-my.sharepoint.com/personal/t_lawrence_yorksj_ac_uk/Documents/Team%20Resources/Online%20Resources/Critical%20Writing/Critical%20Paragraphing%20Examples.docx?web=1).
2. Then see if you can apply it to your own writing!