

# Three barriers to critical thinking essay sample



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Three Barriers to Critical Thinking Barriers to critical thinking, as proposed by American philosopher Charles Peirce, are “ anything that blocks the road to inquiry.” Peirce is the founder of the American philosophy called Pragmatism, which is the belief that all thought is contextual. Pragmatism is the paradigm for critical thinking and thought processes that allow people to makes sense of the world. Peirce believes that there are several barriers to critical thinking such as stubbornness, prejudice, and even fear. Stubbornness can effectively block critical thinking in a number of ways. Peirce refers to stubbornness as “ the method of tenacity” in which a clear set of beliefs and a certain level of comfort prevents individuals from thinking critically. (Peirce, 1877).

Moreover, individuals who are set in their ways and find solemn in perceiving the world in a certain manner are more likely to refute thinking critically. This can become problematic in a few ways. One, individuals who cling to one way of thinking run the risk of becoming stagnant and fall behind in an ever-changing world. Also, stubbornness can be a barrier even when evidence of new facts emerges. Individuals who cling desperately to their previous beliefs can run the risk of never being able to accept new information or ways of thinking. To overcome this, an individual needs to have some level of acceptance for new ideas. There isn't anything wrong with holding certain beliefs near and dear; however, when new facts surface, it is a good idea to be open to understanding the world in a new light. Alongside stubbornness, prejudice can also hinder critical thinking.

Although most people know it is not a good thing to be prejudice against one another, it is common for individuals to be prejudice against new ideas.

Pierce talks about how prejudice (or bias) can discourage critical thinking by allowing an person to shutout new ways of perceiving the world that doesn't feel familiar and that could possible make them feel uncomfortable.

Prejudice stems from an individual's culture, upbringing, environment, and personal beliefs that have been instilled in them throughout their life. When new ideas emerge, people tend to favor familiar ways of thinking and may become biased towards what they already know to be true. Critical thinking cannot occur when an individual is too biased towards former beliefs. To overcome prejudice, one should take into account the options, beliefs, and facts presented by other individuals in an attempt to broaden their horizons. In doing so, critical thinking can take place and people are able to make unbiased decisions. Sometimes stepping outside of the comfort zone is too daunting for some individuals, which in turn, inhibits critical thinking.

Fear can be a powerful form of controlling individuals, as history shows; however, fear can also prevent individuals from accepting new ways of thinking. As aforementioned, a person's beliefs can become comforting because they are familiar. Hence, it shouldn't come as a surprise that people could become fearful of new ways of thinking. Fear can prevent critical thinking by forcing a person to become stuck in their ways. Overcoming fear is an uphill battle; many individuals dread facing their fears; however, it is not impossible. The best way to overcome fear is to face the fear head on. By throwing themselves into something that fears them, individuals would be able to overcome it and accept new facts about the world.

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