Critical Thinking Skills

Judging the quality or relevance of anything to your personal standard is CRITICAL THINKING.

KEY CONCEPTS

Your Disposition → Are you open-minded and fair about all ideas?
Criteria for selection of info → Do you know how you’re going to select your sources?
Analyze arguments → Do you look for & analyze the main statement from the source?
Reasons for choosing any source → Do you know WHY you chose one source over another?
Your point-of-view → What are your own thoughts when reading the source?

BEWARE

Do you believe everything you read, see, or hear?
There may not be a quick and easy solution.
The online catalog does NOT have everything you need.
The Internet does NOT contain everything.
All Web search engines do NOT search equally.
Just because it’s on the Internet doesn’t make it true.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

INITIAL QUESTIONS
What key terms and phrases emphasize the main ideas of your research?
What precisely am I trying to ask?
What concepts or ideas are central to my thinking?
What’s my point of view?

FOCUSING QUESTIONS
What information am I using?
How am I interpreting that information?
What conclusions am I making?
What am I taking for granted?

JUDGEMENT BASED QUESTIONS
Who is this written by and for? And why?
How accurate is it?
Do I challenge it or accept it? Why?
Is this information relevant to my needs? Why?
Is one source better than another for the same information? Why?

ACTIONS OF CRITICAL THINKERS

THEY NEED TO BE:
Open-minded
Persistent
Skeptical
Fair

THEY NEED TO HAVE:
A pro-active attitude
An active imagination
A questioning curiosity

THEY NEED TO ALWAYS:
Ask questions
Dig or mine for information
Look at information goals in pieces

FINALLY - If you don’t remember anything else ... remember THIS!!

Always ask the question “WHY!”