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David Towsey

Cambridge International AS & A Level

Global Perspectives & Research

Coursebook

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Contents

Introduction

Who is this book for?

This book is designed to support students and teachers with the Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research syllabus (9239). Global Perspectives & Research is an unusual course in that it has several distinctive purposes:

- It is designed to be global in scope, introducing you to issues which affect a range of different people across the world, and are of sharp contemporary relevance for our planet in the 21st century.
- It encourages you to explore different perspectives – alternative ways of seeing particular situations – and to appreciate that there is usually more than one perspective on any issue we encounter.
- Although intended to be a valuable experience in itself, it is also intended to support the development of academic skills which you can apply to other subjects you are doing, and that will also support you with the next stage of education or work.

By completing this course, you will acquire specific ways of working and attitudes to study that will change the way you approach all of your academic studies, not just this AS or A Level.

The nature of Cambridge Global Perspectives®

Global Perspectives & Research is unlike most AS & A Level courses in that it is cumulative and integrated. It is cumulative in that each stage builds on the previous one, and your success in each of the assessments depends in a very direct way on the ones you have previously completed, and the work you have done before. It is integrated in that the course as a whole fits very closely together, and the skills and attitudes you learn will depend on everything that you have done, and not individual units or assessments taken separately.

The ideas that each stage of the course builds on the one before, and that the whole of the course can be seen together, are brought together in a metaphor called the Critical Path. This is introduced in detail in Chapter 1, but the book will continue to use it as a representation of the skills you are developing and how they fit together. It is a metaphor because it uses the idea of a path as a representation of a route towards a destination, but one which connects that end point with where we started from, and shows how each step along the route builds on the one that went before. It is a 'critical' path because the linked skills you will be building up will encourage you to be critical, or to question what you find around you.

How to use this book

Because of the nature of the course, this is not the sort of book that you can just dip into in order to find out how to accomplish a specific task, or to retrieve a particular piece of information you need. The first chapter is an essential starting point, because it explains the idea of the Critical Path and models how it works in bringing together a set of linked skills and activities to interrogate and explore questions of global relevance. Chapter 1 then needs to be read together with Chapters 2 and 3: these contain teaching on core skills from the Critical Path which are most immediately useful for tackling the texts and questions you will find in the written examination paper. However, they are equally essential for all of the other components, and the later chapters will make less sense if you are not familiar with what is contained within the first three.

Chapters 4 and 5 are focused on researching for and writing the essay. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 each focus on an aspect of the team project. Once you are familiar with the approach of the Critical Path and its core skills, it will then be possible to read either of these sets of chapters as a unit in order to prepare for the other components. By working through to the end of Chapter 8 you will have covered everything required for the AS if your learning aim is to complete that only.

In order to also undertake the A Level, you will also need to complete the research report, which is covered in Chapter 9. It is important to realise, however, that the Global Perspectives & Research A Level is also staged: this means that the requirements of the research report assume that you have previously experienced all three of the AS components. The report requires you to bring together all of the skills and approaches from the AS components and apply them in one piece of work. As the final stretch of the Critical Path, you can embark on the report with confidence once you have worked through everything else the course has to offer.

Key features of this book

Each chapter contains the following features, designed to help you get the most from your study.

Learning aims

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the relationship between skills and knowledge
- ask questions about a number of different global issues
- explain the Critical Path
- make use of the Critical Path to understand issues
- relate the Critical Path to the core academic skills of analysis and evaluation
- reflect on how the Critical Path can be used to develop skills and make decisions about issues and debates.

Learning aims: Each chapter begins with a short list of the areas of learning aims for you to achieve. For example, these are the learning aims for Chapter 1.

Activities: Activities are designed so that you can work independently, in pairs or in small groups. There may also be occasions when a teacher wants to use one or more of the activities with students at the same time, or as a task for you to complete alone or together outside the classroom.

ACTIVITY 1.01

1 Make a list of some of the **knowledge** you have acquired from your studies so far. This might include scientific knowledge, such as the boiling point of water, knowledge about different countries and cultures, or knowledge of specific information which is useful in the study of a subject.

2 Now make a list of some **skills** you think you already have as a student. These might be skills of writing, note-taking or organising your study notes and revision, or skills you have in speaking or interacting with others.

Practising presentations for your team project

This section of the chapter is divided into three: firstly, establishing the effectiveness of your presentation, secondly, developing the effectiveness of your presentation and finally, enhancing the effectiveness of your presentation. Each section is designed to build on the one before. You can either work through each section in turn or choose the section that you feel is at the most appropriate level for you.

You should also see a progression of difficulty through the three levels, but they are also aligned in this chapter to the distinctive skills we have established.

These sections use a variety of topics from the Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research syllabus.

Establishing effective presentations

Based on what you have read in this chapter, take an inventory of your presentational skills.

- What can you do well already, and what evidence do you have for this from your previous experience with giving presentations?
- What do you still need to work on with your presentational skills and how will you do that?

Developing effective presentations

Plan out the structure of your presentation and make notes on what you will say. Do not try to produce a script, but instead use a mind-map or bullet points to produce a detailed summary which you can then transfer onto cue cards to support your presentation.

Enhancing effective presentations

Choose a type of visual aid or aspect of personal performance from this chapter which you have not tried before. Alternatively, select a method you have used and take advantage of the ideas about where to use it in a new way. How can you develop this to creatively present the explanations and arguments in your presentation?

Differentiated practice: Chapters 2–8 also have fully differentiated practice sections at the end of each chapter on green pages. These sections are differentiated at three levels: developing, establishing and enhancing. These allow you to practise the skills you have acquired and developed throughout the chapter.

Discussion point

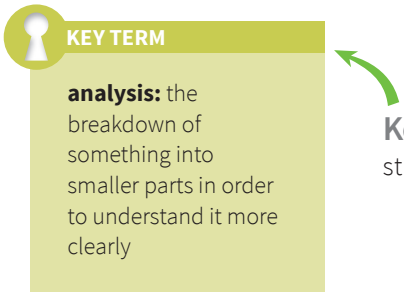
Talk to a group of other students (who may or may not be following the Global Perspectives & Research course) about your experiences of working together with people.

Considering your past experiences and sharing your feelings is an important first step towards the work you will do to develop your collaborative skills on this course.

Discussion points: The purpose of discussion points is to enable you to discuss your own thoughts and ideas with someone else, so that you not only get different opinions but can also clarify your own thinking by saying things out loud.

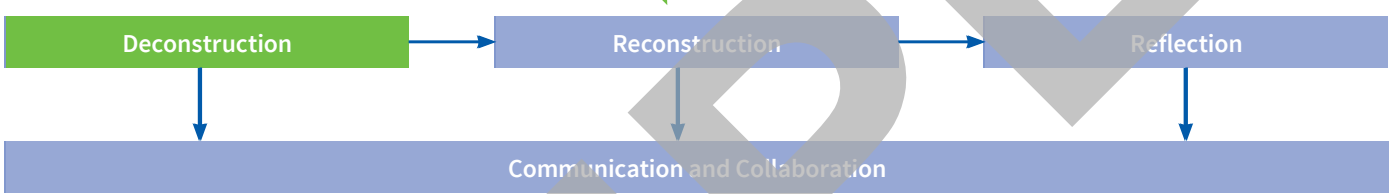
Reflection points: Reflection points are included throughout the book so that you have the chance to think about how your skills are developing and how they can be applied.

Reflection: Have there been occasions in your life, in any context, where you have had to combine information from a number of different places in order to get something done or find something out?



Key terms: Key terms are included throughout the text and provide clear and straightforward explanations of the most important terms in each chapter.

Critical Path links: Each chapter also contains a diagram that indicates which part of the Critical Path is highlighted within the chapter. This example shows that Deconstruction will be covered in the chapter.



Summary: There is a summary at the end of each chapter to help you review what you have learnt.

Summary

In this chapter, we have:

- identified why skills are important, and considered the focus of the Global Perspectives & Research course on developing skills
- considered what issues are in a global context, and practised using those skills to explore, discuss and make decisions on a number of example issues together in groups, as well as reflecting upon and communicating those decisions
- formally identified this process as something called the Critical Path, and showed how this path relates to each stage and type of learning you will undertake for Global Perspectives & Research
- used the Critical Path to provide a roadmap for the whole of this book and to show how each chapter will help you to develop particular skills and prepare for specific examined assessments.

The skills contained in the Critical Path and discussed in this chapter will form the basis of your learning throughout your Global Perspectives & Research course. When you did Activity 1.03 you covered all the areas of this process. Becoming a more effective student of Global Perspectives & Research will now involve repeating and developing those skills in more detail and in a range of different contexts. It will be through a process of repetition – practising, getting feedback, identifying strengths and weaknesses, then testing yourself again in new contexts – that you will become a fully competent student of Global Perspectives & Research. It is the aim of this book to help you achieve that goal.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 2 Activity 2.02 entry for 'Internet' from Encyclopaedia Britannica; Activity 2.06 from 'Graffiti is young, cool, creative – let it happen, by Lady Pink in the New York Times, July 2014; Activity 2.07 from 'Graffiti is a public good, even as it challenges the law' by Lu Olivero in the New York Times, July 2014; article extract 'Why the UK should embrace fracking' by Chris Faulkner in the Guardian, copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2017; from 'Fracking', Greenpeace www.greenpeace.org; Activity 2.12 source 1 from 'Floody Obvious' (The Sun Says, 2016), The Sun, © News Syndication; Activity 2.12 source 2 from 'The Guardian view on the heatwave: still hope on climate change', The Guardian, Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2017; Activity 2.12 source 3 from 'Changing the climate debate' by Bjorn Lomborg, Prospect Magazine, November 2007; Deconstruction document 1 from 'Here are the three biggest threats to the world right now' by Mehreen Khan, January 2016 © The Telegraph 2016; Deconstruction deocumner 2 from 'Migration is now a fact of life…deal with it – The City View' from City A.M. October 2015; Chapter 3 Activity 3.02 extract 1 from 'Achieving Gender Equality: When Everyone Wins' by Charlotta Sparre for Daily News Egypt, October 2015; Activity 3.02 extract 2 from 'Gender equality' from UNESCAP; Activity 3.03 extract 1 from 'Let's just be honest and allow drugs in sport' by James Kirkup, June 2015 © The Telegraph 2016; Activity 3.03 extract 2 from 'Why it's time to legalise doping in athletics' by Julian Savulescu (August 2015) with permission from The Conversation; extract from 'How Costa Rica runs on renewable energy - and why it's so hard to replicate' by Aimee Meade, September 2017, The Independent; Deconstruction document 1 & 2 letters by Claire Robinson and Mark Lynas in the Independent, March 2015; Deconstruction document 1 from 'Fear about GM crops is not backed up by facts', by William Reville, July 2015 in The Irish Times, with permission from the author William Reville; Deconstruction document 2 from 'Approach GM foods with caution, not total rejection' by Fr Dr John M M Kamweri, June 2015 in The Observer (Kampala)

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Chapter 1
Getting started with the Critical Path

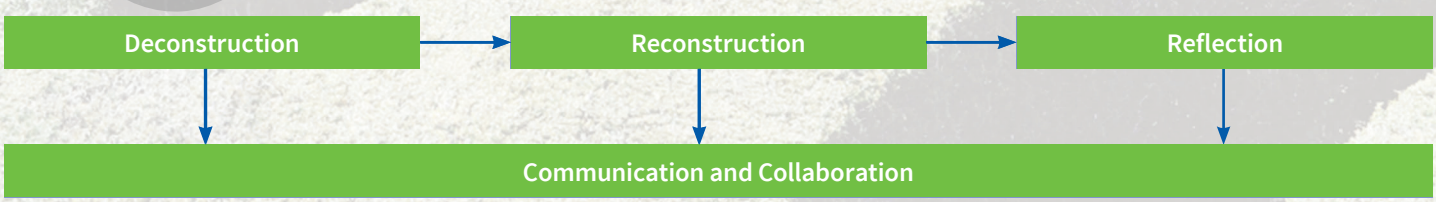
Learning aims

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the relationship between skills and knowledge
- ask questions about a number of different global issues
- explain the Critical Path
- make use of the Critical Path to understand issues
- relate the Critical Path to the core academic skills of analysis and evaluation
- reflect on how the Critical Path can be used to develop skills and make decisions about issues and debates.

This chapter will support you with all of the assessed components of Global Perspectives & Research: written exam answers, essays, team projects and your research report.

The Critical Path consists of three linked steps which build on one another as types of thinking, and two closely associated skills of expression which support them:



Introduction

We live in a complex and ever-changing world. The amount of information in existence, and our access to it on a daily basis, would have baffled previous generations. This information is **global** both in its scale across the planet, and in its **local** variety in many different places.

When we refer to something as 'global', we are not only concerned with things that relate to the whole globe, or world, at once. Global insights also come from comparing the situation in different global locations so that we understand the world through its diversity. Understanding global diversity, however, also means having a sharp sense of the local. When we study the local, we are looking at a specific place, not the world as a whole. This might be our own locality (our town, region or country), or concerns which are local to other places or cultures but not our own.

All of this variety also means that we will encounter a number of different, and frequently conflicting, points of view. Deciding who might be correct, and what we think ourselves, is not an easy task. We need some techniques which will enable us to discover what people think, why they believe what they do, and how we might develop, justify and present our own points of view.

KEY TERMS

global: pertaining to the world as a whole, either looked at overall, or compared in its diversity

local: relating to specific places in the world looked at individually. These might be villages, towns, regions or countries.

skills: any mental or physical abilities you can improve through practising them

knowledge: our understanding of facts or other information

1.01 Skills and knowledge

A Level Global Perspectives & Research differs from most other subjects which you might study. This is because it helps students to develop **skills** rather than testing the recall of specific **knowledge**. It is designed to help you with some tools and approaches to engage with the complexity of the modern world, to understand the views of others and to help you put forward your own.

Being skilled means having the ability to do something effectively. It is any mental or physical ability in which you can become expert through practice or learning.

Knowledge is often seen as another word for the information or facts we possess about the world, as distinct from being skilled. However, knowledge and skills could be said to be closely related in a number of ways. Knowledge in the sense in which we are interested is (according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*) 'understanding of or information about a subject that you get by experience or study'. Being skilled could be said to be having developed the ability to understand a subject through practice. In this sense, skills are the tools we need to use knowledge effectively. We can improve our skills by using them repeatedly and reflecting on how we have used them in order to handle knowledge purposefully.

ACTIVITY 1.01

1 Make a list of some of the **knowledge** you have acquired from your studies so far. This might include scientific knowledge, such as the boiling point of water, knowledge about different countries and cultures, or knowledge of specific information which is useful in the study of a subject.

2 Now make a list of some **skills** you think you already have as a student. These might be skills of writing, note-taking or organising your study notes and revision, or skills you have in speaking or interacting with others.

Reflection: What do you think the main differences are between skills and knowledge? Which is more important, and do we need both?

1.02 Global issues

KEY TERM

issue: a topic or idea of importance locally or globally

Global Perspectives & Research starts with noticing **issues** in the world around us. Let's begin by exploring one of these.

What can we use to power our lives? For most of the world, the answer is fossil fuels such as oil, gas or coal. For motor transport, heat and light, and electronic devices of all kinds, there is no clear alternative that would keep everyone and everything running. Yet these sources of energy have some clear limitations. Firstly, they are finite: laid down in the earth over millions of years, at our current rates of usage we will have used all of them up in a century or two at best, and possibly much more quickly than that. Secondly, many argue that they are changing our climate: their emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is warming the planet at rates which far exceed previous periods of natural climate change and risk catastrophic consequences of flooding and drought in different parts of the world. Yet many of the proposed solutions of renewable energy have their own problems: would wind, wave or solar power produce enough to fill the gap, and does the other alternative – nuclear power – carry too many risks of its own? Perhaps the best solution is for communities to change their ways of life so they use less energy in the first place.

ACTIVITY 1.02

1 The issue here is where we should get our energy from. What is your view? Write down your ideas or discuss them with someone else.

2 From the alternatives listed, which do you think is the best source of energy? Perhaps you have another alternative you would like to suggest, or think we should continue to use fossil fuels for as long as we can.

Another response might be to ask whether we should be using as much energy in the first place, or even to question who 'we' is here. Industrialised countries, located mostly in the northern hemisphere, use by far the most energy, although some rapidly industrialising countries, such as Brazil and China, are catching up fast. On the other hand, many countries in the developing world use far less.

Consider these options and use them to develop your responses to (1) in more detail.

Reflection: We now have a range of possible responses to this issue. Are they all mutually contradictory, or could some be reconciled so that they support one another? For example, is it possible that the world could switch to several different forms of alternative energy, depending on local circumstances? On the other hand, the views of those who see fossil fuels as the only realistic source of energy for the industrialised world at least may always be in conflict with those who argue that they are too polluting.

How can we decide between these alternatives, or can we do so at all? Are there additional details we could find out to resolve the disagreements, or at least better justify each view, and where would that information come from?

ACTIVITY 1.03

Read through the following four issues. If you are working in groups, you might want to take one each and present your findings to the whole class. For each issue, consider the following points:

- What is your own opinion about this issue?
- Are there other possible opinions, or if you are working in a group, can you make a list of the opinions of each member of the group?
- Where different opinions demonstrate disagreements, can you resolve these by reaching a compromise?
- What more could you find out about this issue in order to reach a more considered opinion?

Issue 1: Online communities

The growth of the internet has transformed social, cultural and economic life in ways that would have been inconceivable even a few decades ago. Online communities such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have allowed people to present themselves, find and remain connected to others in ways which would have previously been difficult or impossible. Information and learning are now available on a near-ubiquitous level, simply by typing a term into a search engine, signing up for a discussion list or enrolling in an online educational course. The ability to publish and consume knowledge has also become highly democratic, crossing social groups and international boundaries in a way that is almost entirely outside the control of the authorities.

This power to construct and share your identity, however, has also brought about the ability to conceal it. Is the fellow 16-year-old girl you are messaging actually a 25-year-old woman – or a 50-year-old man? The definition of 'community' has also shifted in less appealing ways. The student community, or game-playing community, or YouTube-watching community can helpfully extend our notion of the term in ways not limited by geography. However, other 'communities' have used the anonymity of the internet to share and spread offensive or illegal material. The internet has also become the favoured medium for radical political groups, often advocating intolerance or violence, to disseminate their ideas.

Discussion point

- Does it matter if people present themselves online differently to how they are in person?
- How comfortable are you with these definitions of 'community'?

Issue 2: Quality of life

What makes people happiest? One answer might be money, but evidence from countries in the developed world suggests that this might not always be the case. In recent years, many countries in Europe and America have suffered from an increased threat of terrorism, which has produced a sense of personal insecurity. Despite similar levels of wealth, different countries can also vary in the availability of social and healthcare services, meaning that the position of individual citizens can be much more precarious, especially if they experience unemployment, or have not insured themselves against risks.

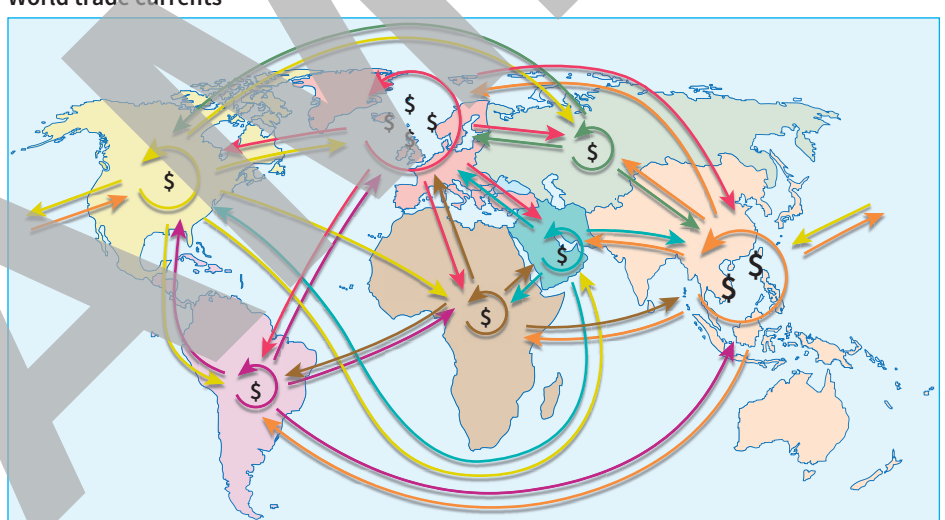
Work–life balance can also play a role: the advanced industrialised economies might be able to generate much more money, but in order to do so many individuals are encouraged to make themselves available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, receiving messages on their smartphones. Even climate can also be a factor, as the dark winter nights in some parts of the world can cause psychological disorders related to the level of available light, especially if people have to get up early or come back late in order to travel to work.

Discussion point

- What is your view of the most significant factors influencing personal happiness?
- Does money matter most in the end, or does the individual's level of personal security, or freedom, play a greater role?
- To be happy, is it necessary to be able to balance work with family, or does it all come down to geographical location?
- What does happiness mean?

Issue 3: Global trade

World trade currents



Many of the manufactured goods purchased in Europe or North America are made in China or the Indian subcontinent. Sometimes this means that an item of clothing might cost more to repair, or even to dry clean, than it was to buy in the first place. For many electronic items, such as laptop computers or smartphones, the price of the individual product may be many times more than the monthly wage of the worker who assembled it.

Yet, especially for electronic devices purchased on contract, it can often make more financial sense for the consumer to throw it away after a couple of years in favour of a slightly

upgraded model. Those discarded phones often end up back in the developing world, in vast waste dumps, where the metals and chemicals used in their manufacture slowly pollute the environment and make people sick.

Discussion point

- Do you consider these sorts of relationships to be an inevitable part of global trade?
- Should factors such as the environment, human health, or the gap between rich and poor play a greater role in international relations, whatever the cost?

Issue 4: Healthcare

In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, most aspects of healthcare are publicly funded, and made free at the point of use through a government-backed health service. This is an enormous benefit to many people: medical treatment is related to need, rather than the ability to pay. However, getting treatment under such systems can mean a wait of many months, particularly for hospital appointments and surgical procedures. Some more recent (and expensive) drugs are also not available, even though they have been shown to help some people. Others have expressed their concern about the conditions (especially in terms of hygiene) of hospital wards, and the general standards of care available.

Some other countries, for example the United States of America, have a healthcare system based on private health insurance. There are no limits on the range of treatments available, no compromises on the standard of care and no significant waiting lists – provided you have the ability to pay. If your financial resources are more limited, you will receive considerably less, or perhaps no medical treatment at all, however ill you are. Yet when former President Obama introduced a system in the US with more publicly controlled elements and the requirement for everyone to have the option of reasonably priced health insurance, he met fierce political opposition.

Discussion point

- What is the fairest system of healthcare, and is this the same as the most effective one?
- Does government healthcare place unacceptable limits on our ability to choose our own medical treatments?
- What about countries where little or no modern healthcare is available – public or private?

Reflection: What do you think you learnt from Activity 1.03? What process did you follow to reach conclusions, and were there any barriers you needed to overcome?

1.03 Following the Critical Path

The Critical Path process

If you did Activity 1.03 yourself, or discussed it in groups with other students, you may find that you had to do something like this:

1. *Identify* the issue and your own opinion about it.
2. *Explore* alternative viewpoints, especially those which came from other members of your group.
3. *Consider* the strengths and weaknesses of each point of view in order to make your own judgements.
4. *Communicate* the results of this process to others, either by making personal notes or explaining it to other people in your group or class.

Each of these activities needs to be undertaken in order, and each one builds on the next. Before being able to say anything about the issue, we need to *identify* it first. This allows us to decide what we are responding to, what we want to say and what that might mean.

When we know what we have identified, then we can *explore* alternative points of view, measuring how they differ from our own responses. These might include information and ideas we find from elsewhere.

All this then allows us to *consider* the extent to which those other viewpoints might make us change or develop our own.

We can *communicate* the results of this process at the end to others, by speaking or by writing, in a report, essay or piece of reflective writing.

Our audience is important, as any communication involves a relationship, or *collaboration*, with other people – whether we have ever met them or not. In truth, both the communication and the collaboration do not occur only at the end of the process. Just as, when discussing the issues in the activity, you may have been working with others from the start, you will also have been undertaking many separate and individual acts of communication along the way.

Discussion point

- Of these four steps, which did you find easiest, and which did you find most challenging to complete?
- What do you think the effect is of combining the steps so that they build on each other?

Discuss your answers to these questions with your teacher and other members of your class.

In embarking on this path and following this course of linked tasks to complete Activity 1.03, you have in fact demonstrated all the skills required of you by A Level Global Perspectives & Research. As with any skill, repeated practice will improve the precision and detail of your performance of it. You will also need to be able to explore how you can follow the path in a variety of different contexts: answering formal questions in an examination, researching and writing essays, working with groups of other people, giving oral presentations to an audience and putting together an extended research report. However, the path itself, and its skills, will remain the same.

In Global Perspectives & Research, we call this path the **Critical Path**. The course develops and tests your ability to perform the skills associated with each stage of the path and to combine them together in order to carry out typical academic or professional tasks. In this sense, mastering the Critical Path will give you a core set of competencies for the other International A Levels, or equivalent courses, you are also following.

Deconstruction

Deconstruction is what you do first, and involves answering some questions about what you are looking at:

- What is the issue you are investigating?
- Are there different points of view about this issue?
- Who is saying what? Where are they saying it? This might be in newspapers, magazines, books or other kinds of source.
- Where is the evidence that will enable you to reach your own answers?

You may notice that all of these questions have something in common: they require **analysis**. Analysis literally means 'breaking down' (from the Greek term *analusis*: 'breaking apart' or 'loosening'). It is one of the most important skills A Level students need to have. We are breaking down what we are doing into issues, views, sources and evidence. By doing this we can see its inner workings more clearly and precisely.

KEY TERM

analysis: the breakdown of something into smaller parts in order to understand it more clearly

Even when you have answered these questions, you will not be finished. As well as breaking down views, sources and evidence, we need to make some judgements about how useful or convincing they are:

- How persuasive is that point of view?
- How convincing is the person, organisation or publication which presents it?
- How effectively is it supported by evidence?

In doing so, you will not only be analysing issues, views and evidence, you will be engaging in **evaluation**. When we evaluate something, we are making judgements on its value. This involves measuring its strengths and weaknesses in order to make a decision on how convincing or useful it is for the task in hand. These questions of evaluation will be broken down further and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

KEY TERMS

evaluation: an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of something in order to make a judgement about it

synthesis: the combining of more than one thing together in order to understand them more effectively by exploring their differences and similarities

debate: the confrontation of opposing views on an issue, where each tries to show they are more convincing than the others

Reflection: Are there examples from your previous experience where you have had to analyse or evaluate? How did you find this?

Reconstruction

Reconstruction follows from deconstruction as the next stage on the path. They are closely related to one another, but while deconstruction works inwards, measuring and weighing up individual views, sources and evidence, reconstruction faces outwards. Interestingly, another term for reconstruction is **synthesis**. This is the opposite of analysis and comes from the Greek verb *syntithenai*, 'to put together' or 'to combine'. When we reconstruct, we are putting back together on a larger scale what has been broken apart by deconstruction. Rather than just looking at one point of view, reconstruction is concerned with **debates**: how might that view be challenged, and what are the alternatives? Finally, reconstruction is also interested in putting together views, sources and evidence into larger groupings which share something in common.

Some of the questions we might ask here include:

- Who would agree or disagree with this view and why?
- Where else would we find additional evidence in support of this view?
- Why does more than one person or organisation subscribe to this view?
- What leads individuals or organisations to support one view more than another?
- Which approaches to issues seem stronger or more convincing, and why?

KEY TERM

perspective: a coherent worldview in response to an issue

Chapter 3 will combine reconstruction with deconstruction to show how these questions can be answered. It will also introduce the idea of **perspectives**: as the title of this course suggests, these are central to the skills we are trying to develop. The organisation of points of view into shared and opposing groups is key. (Perspectives are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.)

Reflection: Have there been occasions in your life, in any context, where you have had to combine information from a number of different places in order to get something done or find something out?

Reflection

Reflection has several different, but equally important, meanings on the Critical Path:

1 Reflection is firstly about considering what you think, and why. Which view is strongest? Which approach is better? Which evidence is more convincing? Being able to look carefully at what you have found out, consider it, and make a judgement is one of the most important outcomes of this course, and doing it well depends on its close relationship with the stages of deconstruction and reconstruction. Reflection is not the same as just having an opinion, and it needs to be supported by the views and evidence you have already broken down and grouped together.

2 Reflection also has a second sense as part of your studies on this course. You are encouraged, all the time, to reflect on what you are doing and how you are working. This includes your own learning, but also your experiences of working together with others, especially in team projects. This type of reflection identifies and weighs up what you have achieved so you can measure the learning you have already achieved and perform better in similar situations in the future.

Chapter 4 explores the first type of reflection, focusing on the kind of thinking and judgements you will need to make when writing essays, and how this relies on what you have already deconstructed and reconstructed. Chapter 8 is concerned with the second type of reflection, both in your general development as a learner and for the assessed reflective paper you are asked to write on the work you have done for the team project.

Communication and collaboration

We will now finally deal with *communication* and *collaboration*, not because they come at the end of the process, but because they inform every stage, whether they are assessed there as part of the A Level or not.

Communication has a number of different forms, depending on how and where you are doing it:

- Firstly, by following this course, you will become more effective at communicating in writing using formal, academic formats. One key format you will need to produce

successfully is the essay, and in doing so you will need to be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in this form.

- Secondly, you will also develop your skills of individual, oral communication by giving a formal presentation as part of the team project. This will be your opportunity to effectively communicate your ideas to an audience for up to eight minutes, using appropriate techniques and resources to make your message as compelling as possible. This is an important skill for life, both in many university courses and in employment, where you will often be expected to formally present to your peers, those you manage or people who are more senior than you.

Chapter 5 specifically focuses on the skills of written communication you need for writing a formal, academic essay. Chapter 7 gives lots of detailed advice and activities to help you learn and practise the skills you will need to deliver an effective oral presentation.

Collaboration is a specialised form of interpersonal communication and working. It is a general term for the skills and attitudes required by people when they work together to achieve a shared aim, or use the work of others in their team to improve their own individual learning and performance.

Human beings are social animals, and we would achieve very little if we worked entirely on our own, without the help or contribution of others. This is especially the case in an educational setting: think about the different ways, every day, in which you collaborate with the teacher and other students in every class you are part of, whether Global Perspectives & Research or other subjects. This will continue in university or the workplace, and this course is designed to help with developing those skills.

You are also, however, asked to collaborate in a more specific way when you undertake the team project. Although your final presentation will be an individual performance reflecting your own views and approach, it will rely in part on the common issue and collaborative research you have undertaken as a team with other students. Effective collaboration here is something which will make this task less challenging. When you write your reflective paper as part of the team project, you will not only be required to reflect on your individual learning, you will also be asked to consider how effectively you worked with your other team members. Knowing something about effective collaboration in a professional setting and how to measure this will therefore be very useful when you come to write that reflective paper.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the question of collaboration. This is mainly focused on the collaboration that will be expected of you while undertaking the team project, and how to make effective judgements on the quality of that collaboration. However, it also has lessons you can apply to any collaborative activity, both in your learning for other parts of the course, and in your education and life more broadly.

Discussion point

Talk to a group of other students (who may or may not be following the Global Perspectives & Research course) about your experiences of working together with people.

Considering your past experiences and sharing your feelings is an important first step towards the work you will do to develop your collaborative skills on this course.

A note on the research report and the Critical Path

The work you will do on the written paper, essay and team project do not only lead to an AS in Global Perspectives & Research. They are an essential preparation for your research report. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 9, the final chapter of this book. At this stage, however, it is worth noting that this also means that the various stages of the Critical Path come together to reach the path's destination: the extended report on the thinking and research you will have done for the topic you have selected. As such, it will be your opportunity to demonstrate how well you can combine deconstruction, reconstruction, reflection, communication and even collaboration in undertaking an academic project you have chosen for yourself.

Summary

In this chapter, we have:

- identified why skills are important, and considered the focus of the Global Perspectives & Research course on developing skills
- considered what issues are in a global context, and practised using those skills to explore, discuss and make decisions on a number of example issues together in groups, as well as reflecting upon and communicating those decisions
- formally identified this process as something called the Critical Path, and showed how this path relates to each stage and type of learning you will undertake for Global Perspectives & Research
- used the Critical Path to provide a roadmap for the whole of this book and to show how each chapter will help you to develop particular skills and prepare for specific examined assessments.

The skills contained in the Critical Path and discussed in this chapter will form the basis of your learning throughout your Global Perspectives & Research course. When you did Activity 1.03 you covered all the areas of this process. Becoming a more effective student of Global Perspectives & Research will now involve repeating and developing those skills in more detail and in a range of different contexts. It will be through a process of repetition – practising, getting feedback, identifying strengths and weaknesses, then testing yourself again in new contexts – that you will become a fully competent student of Global Perspectives & Research. It is the aim of this book to help you achieve that goal.

Chapter 2
Introducing deconstruction: analysing and evaluating arguments and evidence

Learning aims

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand the different kinds of reading you need to be doing as a student
- use the advanced reading skills of deconstruction to analyse and evaluate texts
- recognise arguments, and show the difference between arguments and other kinds of writing
- make judgements about sources based on where they have come from and who has written them
- analyse and evaluate the structure of argument used in sources
- deconstruct the evidence used by sources to support their arguments.

This chapter will support you with the written examination paper, but also contains core skills which are needed for the essay, team project and your research report.

As you will remember, deconstruction is the first stage of the Critical Path, described in Chapter 1:

Introduction

This chapter is really about reading. As a student of Global Perspectives & Research, and of A Levels in general, you will need to develop some advanced reading skills. You may well think that you already know how to read effectively, and in fact in order to have reached this level of education you will not only have had to learn how to read, you will have had to establish and develop a good level of reading competence. In this chapter, you will be discovering that you still have plenty of opportunities to develop as a reader, and that it is possible to read in a number of different ways, for a variety of different purposes. Once you have done that, you will be able to practise in detail the reading skills required for effective deconstruction.

2.01 Advanced reading skills

KEY TERM

decoding: reading texts by mapping the marks on the page to specific meanings. Revealing the meaning is like breaking a code.

When you were first taught to read, you had to master the skill of **decoding**. Just as when you learnt to speak your native language, and had to connect the sounds you heard and made to specific meanings, when you learnt to read you had to link marks on the page to the specific word they represented, and the meaning of that word. Reading sentences, paragraphs and then longer texts was a matter of linking together those marks on the page with longer and more substantial chains of meaning. As the texts become longer and the range and type of vocabulary more challenging, this is a more demanding process, one all of us are still engaged with for the whole of our lives. The texts you are reading now, especially for your A Level subjects, require significantly more of you than those you read when you were younger. A lot of the reading you do for pleasure, like magazines or social media updates, or encounter in your everyday life, such as street signs or bus timetables, makes fewer demands, but the process of decoding is still the same.

ACTIVITY 2.01

Make a list in a journal of everything you read over the course of one day. This would include everything from street signs, printed instructions and web pages to writing in a textbook or on a whiteboard.

Look back at what you have written, and conclude your journal entry with a short paragraph reflecting on your reading for the day. Were you surprised by its amount or variety?

ACTIVITY 2.02

Decode this text so that you are clear about what each word and sentence means. When you have done this you should be able to answer the two questions which follow.

Internet, a system architecture that has revolutionized communications and methods of commerce by allowing various computer networks around the world to interconnect. Sometimes referred to as a "network of networks," the internet emerged in the United States in the 1970s but did not become visible to the general public until the early 1990s. . . .

From the entry for 'internet' in the Encyclopædia Britannica

1 Why is the internet sometimes known as a 'network of networks'?

2 When were the general public first aware of the internet?

Discussion point

Discuss with at least one other student how you went about doing this activity. How did decoding the text help you, and were there things that just decoding prevented you from doing?

Active reading

One of the most important lessons you need to learn as a student is that you are an active participant in your own reading. The texts you read are not just units of knowledge to be passively absorbed. Instead, you have a role to play as a reader in not only decoding the text, but taking it apart more thoroughly. This means asking questions and making judgements about what you are reading.

ACTIVITY 2.03

Read the following short text:

Even though the internet is now an established part of the modern world, there remains much debate about its benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, the internet connects people and organisations, and makes the flow of ideas and information much more efficient than it has been in the past. On the other hand, that ease of communication can be a drawback, as it is more difficult to maintain personal privacy as a result.

1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of the internet according to this text?

2 Do you think the internet's benefits outweigh its drawbacks or not? Explain your answer.

Reflection:

- How did your approach to the text differ when answering the questions in Activity 2.02 and 2.03?
- What does this tell us about what is involved in active reading?

In order to actively engage with the text in Activity 2.03, you would have had to identify the debate, and separately group the advantages and disadvantages. In order to answer the final question in the activity, you would also have had to make judgements about how convincing each side was, and compare your own views with those in the text. Because of this, your reading did not simply involve decoding but also required analysis and evaluation: actively breaking down the text into smaller parts, and using that to make judgements about what it said.

2.02 What is an argument?

We have already seen in this chapter that there are different ways of reading. There are also different kinds of text. We can see this if we return to the topic of the impact of the internet.

ACTIVITY 2.04

Compare these three sentences:

A: The internet is a series of interconnecting computer networks.

B: The internet connects people, therefore it is a good thing.

C: The internet is a bad thing because when we use it we are forced to share information about ourselves with others.

List the ways in which these sentences are the same, and the ways in which they differ from one another.

KEY TERMS

claim: a statement which may or may not be true

reason: a claim used to support a conclusion

assertion: an unsupported claim

conclusion: a claim about the world which we are asked to accept based on reasons

argument: one or more reasons leading to a conclusion

argument indicator: a term used specifically to signpost the reasons or conclusions in an argument

Reflection: Sentence A is a purely descriptive statement: it tells us what the internet is. Sentences B and C, however, begin with **claims**, statements which express a view about the internet with which people might agree or disagree. In fact, these two sentences illustrate this perfectly, as the two claims directly contradict each other:

The internet is a good thing.

The internet is a bad thing.

Because of this, when we present claims, we also need to provide **reasons** to go with our claims to justify why other people should accept them. Otherwise, our claims are just **assertions**: statements about things which only repeat our own opinions without any justification. Once a claim has at least one reason to go with it, then it is a **conclusion**, as it provides a justification for us to accept something with which others might disagree. Both B and C do this, as follows:

Conclusion B: the internet is a good thing
Reason B: it connects people

Conclusion C: the internet is a bad thing
Reason C: it forces us to share information about ourselves with others

In both cases, the combination of a conclusion with at least one reason makes it an **argument**. Both use processes of rational thought to ask us to accept something. Sometimes arguments use specific words to connect their reasons to their conclusion. We can see this as example B in the original sentence uses the word *therefore*. This indicates that what comes after the word is the conclusion, and what comes before are the reasons. The word *because* in example A has a similar purpose, except here the word indicates that what comes before is the conclusion, and what comes afterwards are the reasons. Both *therefore* and *because* are examples of **argument indicators**, as they are terms which indicate, or point out, the different parts of an argument. As we have also seen, however, these are not required to make something an argument: all this needs is at least one reason and one conclusion which are linked to one another. Using indicators as signposts just makes it clearer.

Arguments and disputes

There are also other meanings for the word 'argument', however. This is an argument too:

Person 1: I love the internet.
Person 2: I hate it. It's the worst thing ever.

This meaning of argument, as a dispute between people, is probably more familiar to you. Again, we have a difference of opinion, but each side relies on assertion, and emotions probably also have a big part to play.

When we follow the Critical Path, we will certainly be interested in exploring and making decisions about variations of opinion between opposing groups of people. However, the crucial difference is that we will want each side to justify itself using arguments in the other sense, with reasons leading to conclusions.

Discussion point

- Discuss with other students what you understand by the term 'argument'.
- Which type of argument do you find more useful: a dispute, or reasons leading to conclusions? Does it depend on the circumstances in which you find yourself?

Recognising arguments

One important skill you will need when finding arguments to support your research is to be able to recognise them when you come across them, and also to know the difference between arguments and other kinds of writing.

As we have just seen, arguments in our sense can only be reasons that lead to a conclusion. As we have seen, the conclusion is often signposted by an argument indicator, like the word 'therefore'. However, other words, such as 'because', might be used to indicate conclusions or – most often – there is no argument indicator at all, but the conclusion is still present. This still means, however, that we can use a helpful technique called the **therefore test** when looking for arguments to work out whether we have found one.

KEY TERM

therefore test: a technique which inserts the word *therefore* into a text to test whether or not it is an argument

The therefore test works by inserting the word *therefore* immediately to the left of what you think is the conclusion to the argument. If it really is an argument, you should then be able to insert reasons from the argument before the word *therefore* in a way that makes sense, so you can see that the reasons lead to the conclusion.

Take the following example:

> It is important to use content filtering to restrict access to the internet. A lot of material which is available online is inappropriate for children.

We might identify the first sentence of this argument as the conclusion. We can confirm this using the therefore test:

> A lot of material which is available online is inappropriate for children, **therefore** it is important to use content filtering to restrict access to the internet.

ACTIVITY 2.05

Try using the therefore test with these extracts to work out which of them are arguments and which are not.

1 During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, My Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

From Nelson Mandela's statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia trial, 20 April 1964

2 Nelson Mandela was one of the most significant world figures of the 20th century. This is because he served as the first black President of South Africa. He was also highly influential as a global symbol of opposition to the system of Apartheid (racial segregation) in that country. Finally, he is also famous for supporting non-violent opposition to Apartheid despite spending many years in prison.

3 Nelson Mandela was President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was born in 1918 and worked as a lawyer before joining the African National Congress and campaigning against the system of Apartheid in South Africa. He was held in prison for 27 years until 1990.

You may find the following commentary helpful in checking and discussing your answers:

Extract 1 seems very convincing in its insistence on the importance and fairness of the struggle in which Nelson Mandela was involved when he was on trial in 1964. However, wherever we insert the word *therefore*, we cannot highlight a clear conclusion supported by reasons. In fact, it repeats the words 'domination' and 'ideal' and uses two contrasting pairs of words – 'white' and 'black' and 'live' and 'die' to make what it is asserting about that struggle emotionally convincing. This is, in fact, an example of **rhetoric**, language designed to be persuasive, rather than argument, which is language structured to rationally support its conclusions with reasons. We can certainly admire it, and even analyse and evaluate how it achieves its effects, but it is not part of the Critical Path.

Extract 2 is an argument about Nelson Mandela. You may even have spotted the alternative argument indicator, *because*. We can also, however, demonstrate it is an argument by using the therefore test:

- he served as the first black President of South Africa
- he was highly influential as a global symbol of opposition to the system of Apartheid
- he is famous for supporting non-violent opposition to Apartheid despite spending many years in prison
- **therefore** Nelson Mandela was one of the most significant world figures of the 20th century

You may not agree that Mandela was one of the most significant world figures of the 20th century, and you do not have to. However, it is demonstrable that this is an argument which tries to make the case that he was.

Extract 3 is not an argument: it is simply a series of descriptive statements about Mandela, and inserting the word *therefore* anywhere does not allow us to distinguish any reasons or conclusions.

KEY TERM

rhetoric: language which is primarily designed to persuade its reader or listener, rather than using rational techniques of argument to demonstrate the strength of the case it wishes to make

Reflection: Are arguments always the most useful way of approaching an issue? When might it be more appropriate to use rhetoric or description, and what might the benefits of these be?

Discussion point

Use what you have learnt in this section to share with other students or your teacher examples of arguments, rhetoric or descriptions you have come across in your other subjects or more generally.

2.03 Evaluating arguments

Once we have identified a range of arguments responding to an issue, we need to evaluate them. As we saw in Chapter 1 when introducing this term, evaluation measures the strengths and weaknesses of something in order to make a judgement about its value.

Identification and evaluation work together as essential stages in the active reading of sources. Recognising this and putting it into practice is an important stage of your development as a student of Global Perspectives.

Up until this point in this chapter, we have focused on recognising arguments, and **identifying** where the parts of the argument (the conclusion and reasons) can be found in a source. This might also involve **explaining** how the reasons are linked to the conclusion, and why the conclusion is what it is.

Evaluation relies on identification and explanation – we need to know what we are assessing and pick out its strengths and weaknesses before we can make that judgement about its value or acceptability. This is why terms like 'assess' or questions like 'to what extent' or 'how convincing' are often used as equivalents to 'evaluate': they refer to the same process of weighing up and making judgements about parts of an argument.

Your ability to apply these skills when you read a text are directly tested in the written paper, but they are also skills you will need when reading any text throughout the course, so it is important to establish them at the start.

Deconstruction, as the first stage of the Critical Path, is concerned with identifying parts of arguments and explaining how they work in order to make decisions about which arguments are stronger and which are weaker. Knowing this will help in reflecting on the larger judgements required by the later stages of the path.

There are several separate, specific ways in which arguments we find as sources can be measured:

1. the **structure** of the argument: how closely reasons relate to conclusions and how effectively different lines of argument support one another
2. the **evidence** supporting the argument: the quantity, type and quality of pieces of evidence used to back up individual reasons
3. the **context** of the argument: who wrote it, where it was published, when it was written

The following sections of this chapter focus on each of these in turn, showing how they represent different ways of reading arguments. We will then see how they can be combined in order to fully evaluate, or deconstruct, sources, including weighing them up against one another.

KEY TERMS

identify: to establish what or where something is in a text

explain: to show understanding of something in a text by describing it in additional detail

KEY TERMS

structure: the organisation of a text, and how each element within it is placed together

evidence: facts or other data supporting reasons or claims

context: factors that are outside the source and its argument, such as its author or where it was published, that affect its meaning

2.04 Evaluating the structure of arguments

When exploring art in an international context, one popular area of debate concerns the status of graffiti, images or text placed on walls in public areas which, usually, do not have the permission of the property owner. This short extract from an argument by Heather MacDonald, published in *The New York Times*, is an example of an argument which is frequently made against graffiti:

> Graffiti is always vandalism. By definition it is committed without permission on another person's property, in an adolescent display of entitlement. Whether particular viewers find any given piece of graffiti artistically compelling is irrelevant. Graffiti's most salient characteristic is that it is a crime.
>
> *MacDonald, H. (2014) 'Graffitti is always vandalism', The New York Times (11 July 2014).*

This argument consists of a conclusion and three reasons. We could place them in list form as follows:

- *Conclusion:* Graffiti is always vandalism
- *Reason 1:* The definition of graffiti is that it is placed on someone else's property without permission
- *Reason 2:* It is not relevant if specific individuals see graffiti as art
- *Reason 3:* The most important characteristic of graffiti is that it is a crime

KEY TERMS

strength: a feature of an argument which makes it more likely it will be accepted

weakness: a feature of an argument which makes it less likely it will be accepted

line of argument: a separate direction or type of argument which leads to the conclusion

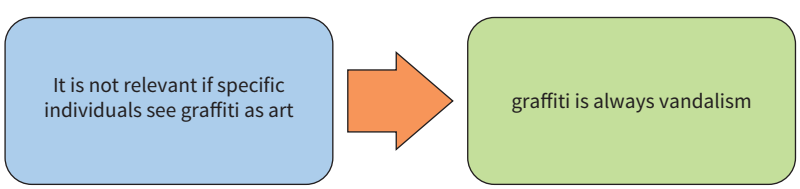
counter-argument: an argument which could be made to challenge another argument

inferential gap: the gap of reasoning between a reason and the conclusion it supports

assumption: an unstated reason which needs to be included in order for an argument to work successfully

When evaluating this argument in terms of its structure, we need to take note of its **strengths** and **weaknesses**. One strength here is that it has more than one **line of argument**. This means that the three reasons each independently support the conclusion from different directions. Reason 1 claims that graffiti shares part of its definition with the definition of vandalism: both involve doing something to someone else's property without permission. Reason 2 claims that just because some people say that graffiti is art does not mean that it is not actually vandalism. Finally, Reason 3 says that even if it has other characteristics, the most important characteristic of graffiti is that it is a crime. Each of these lines of argument takes a different potential **counter-argument**, or argument against the conclusion, and challenges it.

Another area for evaluation, however, is how closely connected each reason is to the conclusion. We call this the **inferential gap**, and it can be represented visually with Reason 2:



In order to accept the conclusion on the basis of this reason, we would need to insert some other claims into the gap. The first is that the majority of people see graffiti as vandalism. The second might be that, in this case, the opinion of the majority is always more important than that of the minority.

We can call these unstated claims **assumptions**: reasons which are not explicitly included in the argument but which must be placed there in order to accept that the conclusion follows

from the reasons which are stated. The more assumptions which need to be made in order to accept the conclusion, however, the weaker the argument can be said to be.

ACTIVITY 2.06

Read the following article, from the same edition of *The New York Times* as that by Heather MacDonald. It is by Lady Pink, a graffiti artist.

Can you:

- identify the conclusion and reasons?
- evaluate the argument by weighing up strengths and weaknesses by locating lines of argument, counter-arguments, inferential gaps and assumptions?

Graffiti Is Young, Cool, Creative – Let It Happen

If graffiti is inspiring, it's because it's fun, cool and does not take formal training. Young kids who paint on the walls are screaming to be heard and, yes, we all started that way. My husband and I have to clean graffiti off of my property from time to time, but I see it as the price we all pay for urban living. A bit of rebellion is something we should champion as a society. Somebody has to question the status quo – or we'll grow stagnant.

I, for one, would also rather see the creative outpouring of our youth on the walls instead of the billboards and advertising inflicted upon us around every corner. The art world has already acknowledged the value of it. Street art has become wildly marketable.

By encouraging kids to create art in this medium – and not just tag their names across walls – we could empower generations. Who knows? They might even be able to make a living doing what they love.

Pink, L. (2014) 'Graffiti Is Young, Cool, Creative – Let It Happen', The New York Times *(11 July 2014).*

Reflection: The conclusion of this article is contained in the headline: we are being asked to 'let it happen'. Applying the therefore test, the three reasons leading directly to this conclusion are firstly that it is 'young', secondly that it is 'cool' and thirdly that it is 'creative'. Each of these in turn is supported by separate lines of argument in the body of the article.

As we weigh up strengths and weaknesses, we could note that it is strengthened in its support by three distinct lines of reasoning. It also acknowledges a counter-argument, that people have to clear graffiti off their property, but responds to it as the price we pay for urban living.

The most significant potential weakness in this argument is the number of substantial inferential gaps. For example, the claim that graffiti is creative is supported by the further claim that its creativity is preferable to billboard advertising. Between the two steps is an inferential gap which would need to be filled with the assumption that graffiti is more creative than advertising. Why this should be is not clear: is it because youthfulness is assumed to be equivalent to creativity, or is there another argument which says that art produced by corporations cannot be creative? Part of the problem is that the word 'creative' itself is not clearly defined, nor is the word 'cool'. The importance of defining terms as part of making arguments is addressed in Chapter 3.

Comparing strengths and weaknesses and making evaluative judgements

Evaluating the structure of arguments, like the other aspects of arguments, requires using the strengths and weaknesses we have identified to make a judgement on how acceptable they are overall. In the case of each of these arguments about graffiti, this judgement is likely to depend on whether one accepts the assumptions it requires. MacDonald's reasoning against graffiti requires us to accept that the majority view on the issue will be correct because most people hold it. Pink, on the other hand, requires us to prioritise youth and change above the majority status quo. Which of the two you decide to support is dependent, in this case, on which set of assumptions you prefer.

To summarise, when we are evaluating arguments based on their structure, we are judging how well constructed they are, as if we were trying to decide if a house was built well or not. This is based on two factors:

- how extensive the foundations are: is there a range of lines of argument, how well do they support each other, and how effectively do they address each aspect of the conclusion?
- how large the gaps in the fabric of the building are: are there excessively large inferential gaps between stages of reasoning which require the insertion of assumptions as missing reasons, or perhaps as an overall claim to make the argument work?

Just because there are gaps to fill does not necessarily mean that we will make an evaluative judgement that the argument overall is less convincing. What may matter most is whether we agree with the assumptions which would need to be used to fill those gaps: if we cannot, then the argument as a whole is more likely to be rejected; if we can, then that may make it more likely we will accept it.

More complex structures of argument

Before moving on from argument structure, we can read one more argument about graffiti, this time by Lu Olivero, director of the Aerosol Carioca, a group based in Rio de Janeiro which focuses on the academic study of graffiti. It appeared in the same special feature in *The New York Times* as the previous two arguments:

Graffiti straddles the line between pure art and pure vandalism.

Banksy's work has unintentionally reignited the "art or vandalism" debate: though the British government has been vigilant in removing his trademark stencil art, labeling it "vandalism," his original works and knockoffs have skyrocketed in price over the last decade. His work is often highly satirical of establishment rules and politics. Why is it that Banksy's work is gobbled up by the same people he is critical of – yet his contemporaries are looked at as "criminals"? Why are they judged so differently?

Thirty years ago hip-hop music was labeled "noise," and graffiti will follow the same trajectory. *Perceptions about street art have already drastically changed.*
For example, in Brazil, during late 1990s, it was common for graffiti artists to be harassed or shot at by the police. Today, many of the same officers support graffiti initiatives for city beautification, and as a crime deterrent. They understand that graffiti can be a career opportunity for youth in low-income neighborhoods. The growth of graffiti in Brazil, and its role in challenging the status quo, demonstrates the power of art, and its ability to create dialogue.

The truth is that despite the acceptance of graffiti, it needs the law so that it can function outside of it. This is where innovation is born, and this is what pushes the art to evolve. Had graffiti artists in Brazil painted inside the lines of the law, many internationally acclaimed artists would never have existed.

Olivero, L. (2014) 'Graffiti Is a Public Good, Even As It Challenges the Law', The New York Times *(11 July 2014).*

ACTIVITY 2.07

Can you come up with a key for labelling each of the coloured sections of this argument (**red**, **blue**, **green** and **orange**)? Each relates to the structure of the argument.

Reflection: The text in red is perhaps the easiest to label. It is the conclusion of Olivero's argument. We can confirm this by using the therefore test, as the claims made in the rest of the argument all support this as a conclusion: graffiti lies between art and vandalism. Yet the rest of the argument is longer than the previous examples we have looked at, and not all of it has been reproduced here. Not only this, it seems to fall into several dissimilar sections. The text in blue is concerned with the British street artist Banksy; the section in green is about how perceptions of street art have changed, especially in Brazil; the orange section is about the relationship between graffiti in general and the law.

We can use what we have learnt already to call these lines of argument: each is a separate pillar supporting the final conclusion from a different direction. But these lines of argument are much more substantial than the ones we have previously looked at. Each works as an argument in itself. We can tell this because the sentence in italics within each section works as a conclusion just for that section, and the therefore test can be used to show that. For example, the fact that Banksy's art has been removed consistently by the authorities, combined with the reason that it has massively increased in value in the art market, leads to the conclusion that his work has reignited the debate about the status of graffiti between vandalism and art.

We can call this sort of conclusion an **intermediate conclusion**, as it is not the final conclusion of the argument. That is called the **main conclusion**. Instead it works as a reason which supports the main conclusion, but also clearly organises each line of argument. Out in the real world, as an active reader, you are more likely to encounter longer and more complex arguments such as this. Therefore, a key skill of reading is to be able to break these arguments down into the smaller arguments which make them up. This type of navigation will help you to extract the precise sections of argument you need in order to be able to reconstruct and reflect on debates effectively yourself.

KEY TERMS

intermediate conclusion: a conclusion which also functions as a reason leading to the main conclusion. It is supported by reasons within a specific section of an argument.

main conclusion: the final conclusion of an argument

2.05 Evaluating the evidence supporting an argument

The structure of the argument itself is not the only aspect we need to consider when evaluating its effectiveness. The evidence supporting each reason or line of argument is equally important. By 'evidence' we mean the facts or other kinds of information which back

up claims or reasons. As well as evaluating the argument itself, we can also weigh up each piece of evidence when coming to an overall judgement.

KEY TERMS

primary evidence: first-hand information, directly about something

secondary evidence: evidence combined or summarised from primary evidence, but not directly from the situation itself

quantitative evidence: evidence which measures the amount of something, usually numerically

qualitative evidence: evidence which measures the quality of something as attributes which cannot be summarised as numerical quantities

facts: measurements of things which are accepted to actually exist, and which can be proved or disproved

opinion: an individual's judgement of the value of something. These cannot be proved or disproved, but can be challenged by other opinions.

Types of evidence

Evidence can come in a number of different types. One of the main distinctions is between **primary evidence** and **secondary evidence**.

Primary evidence can be thought of as the raw material from which we can know about something. It can be a first-hand account, produced by someone who has witnessed an event, or it might be measurements taken directly of the thing being described.

Secondary evidence, on the other hand, consists of books or articles which have been based on the primary evidence. They might summarise the primary evidence for us, or draw together different sources of evidence for something, but the ability to do this means that the secondary evidence will always be placed between us and the primary evidence for an event or situation.

Other types of evidence are **quantitative evidence** which describes things numerically, and **qualitative evidence** which instead describes things subjectively, or in other ways which cannot be reduced to numerical data.

Evidence can also consist of **facts** or **opinions**. Facts can be checked against other sources of evidence, and remain the same: someone's height, for example, or the volume of carbon monoxide generated by the traffic in a city. Opinions depend on individuals' judgement of the value of something, and are based solely on their own point of view. An opinion cannot be questioned on its own terms, but can only be challenged by another, different opinion on the same matter. For example, one opinion, or value judgement, about motor vehicles is that they imprison us in congested cities. Another is that they free people to move around and between geographical areas in ways that would not have previously been possible.

Questions about evidence

As we have seen, the variety of different kinds of evidence means that we cannot make straightforward judgements about a piece of evidence simply based on its type. Primary evidence is not always better than secondary evidence, and opinions can sometimes – but not always – be more effective than facts. Instead it is more important to ask questions about the evidence we encounter in arguments to help us make decisions about its **reliability**: whether we accept that it provides sufficient support for the claim in the argument to which it is being attached.

Asking questions is one of the most important dispositions, or kinds of behaviour, we can have when following the Critical Path, and applies particularly to the active reading which is required by deconstruction.

KEY TERM

reliability: the extent to which a piece of evidence provides acceptable support for a claim or reason

Is it relevant?

The first key question to ask about any piece of evidence is whether it is relevant to the claim it is being used to support. This is illustrated in the following article, published in *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK in 2013, by Chris Faulkner, CEO of Breitling Energy Corporation, which specialises in 'fracking', the injection of high-pressure liquid into underground rock to release deposits of gas.

Why the UK should embrace fracking

The United Kingdom is braced for the worst winter in 60 years, with heavy snows and record cold forecast. For many, survival will take a huge toll on the handbag: last year, the average fuel bill soared to a record £1,353, and the Office for Budget Responsibility says it will increase by £100 on average this year.

If that does not make you shiver, consider this: at one point last winter, the UK's gas supply was a mere six hours from empty.

It does not have to be that way. The future will be a lot warmer if the UK can muster the political will to look to a promising new alternative in energy production – hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking", a drilling technique that releases natural gas stuck in shale formations, opening access to enormous underground reserves.

So far, the UK has refrained from taking advantage of this extraordinary ability to tap previously inaccessible reserves, citing environmental concerns. A close look at the fracking experience across the Atlantic, however, demonstrates how unfounded the concerns are and how beneficial fracking can be, both environmentally and economically.

As the United States has become more adept at tapping its existing energy resources, largely through fracking, the yields have been astronomical: this year, the US became the biggest natural gas producer in the world.

. . .

Faulkner, C. (2013) 'Why the UK should embrace fracking', The Guardian.

As the article's headline suggests, it concludes that the UK should embrace fracking. The evidence it uses to support this could be set out as follows:

1. The UK is forecast to have the worst winter in 60 years
2. The average UK fuel bill went up to £1353 last year
3. This year it will increase by £100
4. Last winter, at one point, the UK was six hours away from running out of gas
5. The US has become the biggest global natural gas producer in the world using fracking

ACTIVITY 2.08

Take the opportunity to ask some questions, as an individual or in groups, about the relevance of the evidence used by Chris Faulkner in his argument. How relevant is each piece of evidence to his conclusion, that the UK should embrace fracking?

Once you have written out your ideas about each piece of evidence, read the reflection below which discusses some ideas about how the relevance of this evidence can be evaluated.

Reflection: The first piece of evidence is about the weather in the UK, and is of a forecast, a piece of secondary evidence, as it is an analysis of data about the weather. It does not seem to be directly relevant to fracking. The next two pieces of evidence relate to domestic energy costs in the UK: their level and rate of increase. Again, this does not seem directly relevant to fracking as a method of energy generation.

The fourth piece of evidence is more relevant, as it is at least evidence of levels of gas reserves in the UK, and the source tells us that fracking is a method of gas extraction. It is not the only method, however, so this piece of evidence would not exclusively support fracking.

The final piece of evidence is not from the UK at all, but from the USA, and is evidence of the economic success enjoyed by the US through fracking as the biggest natural gas producer in the world. It is the most relevant piece of evidence, as it is the only one that describes the benefits of fracking directly. It comes from a different country, however, and requires us to draw the conclusion: in this case adding an intermediate conclusion, which is not supplied in the argument, that the UK will enjoy economic success from fracking. This in turn becomes a reason supporting the conclusion that the UK should embrace fracking.

As can be seen from this reflection, evidence can have differing degrees of relevance to the conclusion being drawn. When evaluating the relevance of evidence as part of an overall argument, we therefore need to ask some important questions:

1. Where is this evidence relevant to the claim being made, and the overall conclusion of the argument? Where is it irrelevant?
2. What further assumptions, evidence or claims would be required to make the evidence relevant to the conclusion?
3. Overall, can we accept the conclusion on the basis of the relevance of the evidence which supports it?

Is it significant or selective?

The final set of questions we should be able to ask about evidence is whether it is selective or significant. Like relevance, these are concerned with which evidence the writer of the argument has chosen to use, and how well it supports their conclusion.

If evidence is **selective** then the argument includes some evidence but leaves other evidence out in order to more strongly support its own conclusion. Although the evidence which is included can be said to be therefore more sharply focused, it is also a negative strategy in that the evidence which is excluded has the potential to challenge the conclusion which has been reached.

The **significance** of evidence, on the other hand, is a measure of whether the writer of the argument has chosen the best possible evidence that provides the fullest support for their argument. Is the evidence that has been used significant, or meaningful, in supporting the argument?

As with our previous reading questions, the best means of understanding them is to see them used in evaluating an actual argument. This is an article on the website of Greenpeace USA, a campaigning environmental charity:

The Dangers of Fracking

Since 2005, more than 100,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled and fracked in the United States.

Fracking has been pursued by countries like Canada, India, the U.K., and China, and in numerous U.S. states.

. . .

Fracking is a water-intensive process. In water-scarce Western states like Texas and Colorado, more than 3.6 million gallons of water are used every time a well is fracked, which can happen multiple times throughout the life of a well.

The process involves injecting a huge quantity of fresh water mixed with toxic chemicals—called fracking fluids—deep into the ground. Fossil fuels companies routinely claim that these fracking fluids are harmless because they're roughly 2 percent chemical and 98 percent water. But 2 percent of the billions of gallons of fracking fluid created by drillers every year equals hundreds of tons of toxic chemicals, many of which are kept secret by the industry.

. . .

While the fossil fuel industry denies it, the EPA has acknowledged the connection between fracking and increased earthquakes since 1990.

Scientists have made firm links between earthquakes in Colorado, Oklahoma, Ohio and Arkansas in the past few years.

Oklahoma, for example, averaged 21 earthquakes per year above a 3.0 magnitude between 1967 and 2000. Since 2010 and the beginning of the fracking boom, the state has averaged more than 300 earthquakes above 3.0 magnitude every year.

. . .

Fracking is diverting money and attention from the real long-term solutions we need for a sustainable energy system, while adding to greenhouse gas pollution and environmental degradation.

→

Join us in telling government and big business to stop pursuing this false solution and start focusing on the energy future we want, one based on clean and renewable energy.

Greenpeace USA, 'Fracking'. Available from: http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/issues/fracking/, n.d.

ACTIVITY 2.09

This article concludes that governments and corporations should stop fracking and turn to alternative sources of energy.

1 List the pieces of evidence used in the Greenpeace USA article.
2 For each piece of evidence you list, identify the claim in the article it is being used to support, and consider how well it supports the main conclusion.
3 Reflect on what you have found:
   a What is the most significant evidence that supports the conclusion? Is any of the evidence less significant?
   b Is the evidence used here at all selective? Why?

Reflection: The article uses a number of different items of evidence. For example:

- the 100,000 oil wells drilled and fracked in the United States
- the 3.6 million gallons of water used each time a well is fracked
- the increased earthquakes in Oklahoma since 2010

Some of the evidence is both relevant to the conclusion and significant in supporting it. The water used by fracking, especially as this is located in states which are susceptible to drought, supports the conclusion that fracking should be stopped because of its environmental impact.

Some pieces of evidence are less firmly significant, however. The number of wells drilled and the list of countries involved are not linked to claims at all. This might support the conclusion that fracking is now a widespread activity, but not in itself that it should be stopped.

The shift in Oklahoma's average number of earthquakes from 21 per year to over 300 since 2010, when fracking started to be increasingly employed, seems convincing. Yet this is selective: we do not have information about earthquake frequencies in other areas at the same time, or any other factors apart from fracking which might have led to the earthquakes. We would need more evidence from other sources in order to be able to accept the link. This is called **corroboration**: evidence used from one source to confirm the acceptability of another.

Comparative evaluation of evidence

Both of these sources, Chris Faulkner's case for fracking, and Greenpeace USA's argument against, use a range of evidence to support their claims. This means that although we have identified some weaknesses in evaluating them individually, neither is obviously weaker than the other overall, although they are quite different in the way that they support their conclusions.

When locating and reading sources in order to explore debates around Global Perspectives & Research issues, it is not useful to seek out obviously weak evidence and demonstrate its shortcomings. This does not tell us very much about the merits of each side. Instead, analysing the different kinds of evidence each source offers will better enable us to make a decision between them.

ACTIVITY 2.10

Compare the examples of evidence from Faulkner and Greenpeace USA in the table below:

Faulker	Greenpeace USA
UK fuel bill £1353	3.6 million gallons water used
US will be biggest natural gas producer	earthquakes increased to over 300 per annum

Table 2.01: The fracking debate: evidence presented by Faulkner and by Greenpeace USA

1 What other items of evidence could you add from the sources to each column of the table?
2 Look at the type of evidence from each article. What differences do you notice and does this help you to make a decision?

Discussion point

You may have noticed in Activity 2.10 that the evidence from Chris Faulkner of Breitling Energy tended to be financial: about the economic benefits of fracking, or the economic disadvantages associated with not fracking. Greenpeace USA, on the other hand, uses evidence of the environmental impact of fracking to argue against it: the amount of water used, and earthquakes generated.

If you had to choose a side in the fracking debate based on the evidence presented, which one would it be and how would you decide? When you discuss this with others, you may find that some people identify that the case for fracking here comes from an economic point of view, because that is the nature of the evidence it presents, whereas the case against tends to be environmental. Therefore, it is no longer really a matter of which side presents the stronger or weaker evidence. Rather, it is a matter of whether we judge the strengths of economic evidence to be more or less significant than those of the environmental. Which do you value more, the economic or the environmental, and does this lead you towards judging on one side of the debate or the other?

2.06 Evaluating the context of arguments

When considering the context of arguments, we are not looking at the structure of the argument itself or its evidence, but at where it comes from. The word 'context' comes from the Latin verb *texere*, to 'weave together'. The prefix 'con' often means 'with' something else, so when we speak of context we mean what is woven together with the text: the people, organisations or environments outside the text of the argument itself which influence, control or organise its meanings. We often do not see these directly or obviously within the

argument itself, but they can have a significant impact on the conclusions it reaches, the evidence it selects and the assumptions it makes.

There are two main ways in which an active reading, following the Critical Path, can make use of context. The first is to *exclude* arguments we may not want to use on either side of the debate when we are looking for suitable sources. We do this by evaluating a source's **credibility**: the factors in its context which might make its arguments more or less believable. By excluding less credible sources on both sides of the debate, we can ensure that we are comparing the strongest possible arguments when making a final judgement.

KEY TERM

credibility: the believability of the claims made by a source related to its context

The second use of context is to help in *locating* arguments. Once we have ruled out weaker arguments and analysed the conclusions, lines of reasoning, assumptions and evidence of those which remain, the context of the source can help us to understand differences between them. Here, the purpose is not to be able to say which arguments are weaker and must be rejected, but instead to be able to choose which ones most convincingly line up with the position we want to choose for ourselves in our final judgement. Chapter 3, which combines the reconstruction, or comparison, of texts with deconstruction, and Chapter 4, which adds in reflection in a guide to planning and writing essays, explore these skills of selection, comparison and choice in much more detail. However, the skill of reading the context of texts will help with all of these.

ACTIVITY 2.11

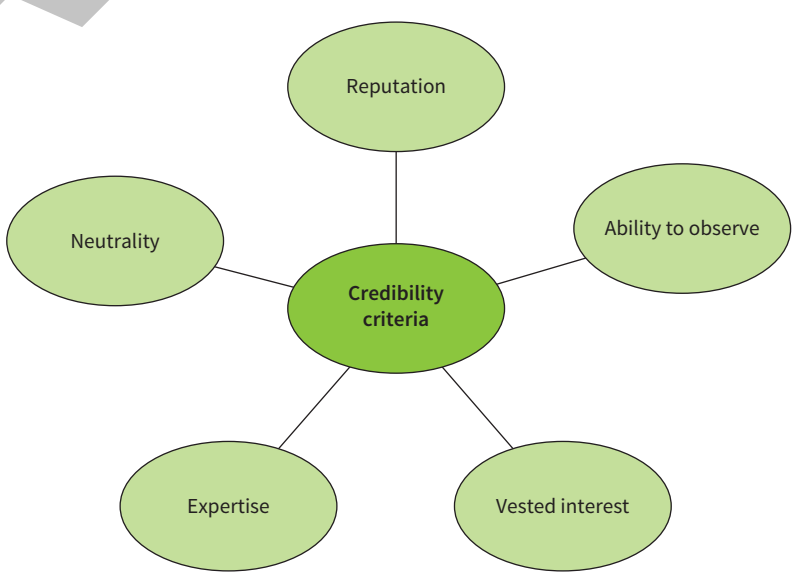
Make a list of the factors in the context of a source which might affect the credibility of its arguments or how we would respond to the judgements made by its conclusion. Examples of these might be the background of its writer or the date of publication.

Discussion point

You can extend the activity by reflecting individually or discussing with others what are the most useful or important contextual factors.

Assessing credibility

When a source is measured in terms of its credibility there are standard criteria, or standards of measurement, we can apply to do this. These are commonly listed as:



These criteria are most useful in helping us to prioritise the sources we might find most useful while undertaking research. Just as emergency personnel often undertake an initial assessment to identify the most urgent or serious cases before sending patients to hospital, credibility criteria are useful in performing an initial sorting of sources in order to identify which will provide the best support for each side of the debate.

The **reputation** of the writer or publication is the evidence we have that their claims, in general, are believable or reasonable. Reputations are built up over time, so a good way to evaluate the reputation of a source is to look at what else the writer has written and how it has been received by others, or how that publication has been written about previously. There are specific categories of publication summarised later in this section that can help us in making decisions about reputation.

Ability to observe is linked to the distinction we have already looked at between primary and secondary evidence. Sometimes a source may make claims about the situation itself, which is part of primary evidence, and we need to make a decision whether they were in a position to have observed that directly. For example, a newspaper reporter filing their report from London might make claims about a refugee camp in Iraq. If we know that they were not able to observe those conditions directly, then any eyewitness account might produce very large inferential gaps because of the assumptions involved. However, if their information is assembled from other, reliable sources of primary evidence, then the ability to observe becomes less important.

Sometimes a source might have a **vested interest** in the claims they are making. This means they would benefit directly from others' accepting the argument they are making. A multinational corporation might, for instance, argue for barriers to trade in a specific country to be lowered when they would then profit from that decision. Or, to use an example from earlier in the chapter, Breitling Energy Corporation has a vested interest in the UK's embracing fracking, as their business is based on gas extraction. However, just because they have a vested interest does not necessarily mean that fracking is a bad idea. It just means we have to be particularly careful in assessing their claims.

The **expertise** of a source is about knowledge they have which informs the case they make. This may enable them to select evidence and employ a level of detail which strengthens their arguments. For example, an environmental biologist would be able to draw on knowledge of ecological processes to closely argue about the consequences of pollution. However, this does not mean that university academics or professionals should always be believed just because of their background. The evidence they use and the arguments they make should be assessed on their own merits, especially if the context of the debate is different to their area of expertise. Experts are not experts about everything.

The degree of **neutrality** of a source refers to whether they have reason to select evidence in order to present a particular case. The argument from Greenpeace USA against fracking in Section 2.05 lacks neutrality because of its selection of exclusively environmental evidence in support of its case. Sometimes sources which are not neutral or balanced in their arguments are described as being **biased**, which is often seen as a weakness in itself. However, all arguments could be said to be biased because they select reasons and evidence in order to support their own conclusion and exclude counter-arguments which challenge them. This is why once a source has been selected, criticising it for bias in itself is a less helpful way of evaluating it.

KEY TERMS

reputation: the past actions or arguments made by a source which have an influence on their current credibility

ability to observe: how far a source has first-hand knowledge of the things it argues about

vested interest: the direct benefit a source would gain from having its conclusions accepted by others

KEY TERMS

expertise: the specific knowledge or learning a source has about the area in which it is arguing

neutrality: the degree to which a source either shows balance or deliberately selects argument and evidence in order to support a particular case

bias: a view of something which deliberately favours one particular aspect or opinion

ACTIVITY 2.12

The credibility criteria can be very helpful in categorising different kinds of source, and making judgements about whether the arguments they contain would be suitable for selection as the strongest representatives of each side of a debate.

Read the following three sources and comment on them using the five credibility criteria. How effective are they under each of these? Once you have done this, reflect on or discuss how this is related to the strengths and weaknesses of argument and evidence they show.

Source 1

Floody obvious

THE only certainty with Britain's weather is that, no matter what it does, it will be deemed proof of global warming.

A mild, rainy December with disastrous floods suits the climate change lobby. So would dry, bone-chilling cold.

But here's something more provably connected: our increasingly regular floods – and our rivers increasingly being too clogged with gravel and silt to drain water out to the sea.

That's because regular dredging is made almost impossible by a crazy EU law to keep rivers "natural" and protect the ecosystem. The result? Cities submerged. Lives and businesses ruined.

Dredging is not the only answer. But it would certainly provide more immediate protection than the puny efforts of climate change conferences to somehow turn down Earth's thermostat.

. . .

'The Sun Says' (2016), Floody obvious, The Sun *(1 January 2016).*

Source 2

Still hope on climate change

. . .

As most of the UK enjoys a brief August heatwave, Nasa has confirmed that July was the hottest month the world has experienced since records began. Even in Britain, where most of the month was wet and cool and felt not very summery at all, it was by a narrow margin the warmest month in the past 130 years of record-keeping – and it was the 10th month in a row that a new high was set. Siberian permafrost is melting, releasing lethal anthrax bacteria from thawing reindeer carcasses into the environment. There are floods in southern Louisiana which have killed 11 people and in California thousands are fleeing from forest fires. The link between short-term weather events and long-term changes in the climate may be tenuous, but it's just what the scientists warned about.

Ever since the general election . . . the political climate has seemed as bleak as the weather has been warm; subsidies for renewables have been cut and incentives intended to encourage landowners to give permission for fracking expanded. . . . Yet there are

➔

glimmers of optimism, too. . . . The Paris climate summit commitment to cut carbon emissions far enough and fast enough to hold the rise in global temperatures below a maximum of 2C is helping to expand the market in renewables, not least by collapsing the appetite for investment in fossil fuels. . . .

The Guardian *(2016), 'The Guardian view on the heatwave: still hope on climate change' (17 August 2016).*

Source 3

Changing the climate debate

Discussion about climate change seems stuck in an unproductive dichotomy. One side argues vehemently that global warming is nothing but a grand hoax. The other side maintains that the planet is headed for catastrophe. In my book, *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming*, I point out how neither side is right, and propose that we stake out a more sensible middle ground.

However, many people in this debate appear to identify almost tribally with one set of arguments. Kevin Watkins's review of my book is a case in point. He claims that while I don't deny that climate change is real, I understate the problems it causes.

. . .

Watkins is bothered by my reporting that the IPCC's estimates show that oceans will rise between 18–59cm, and that the most likely scenario is around 30cm. That's similar to what the planet experienced in the last 150 years and it (rather obviously) coped. Watkins also accuses me of being fixated on low estimates, yet I also consider the IPCC's projections of what would happen if Greenland were to melt much faster: sea levels would rise about 7cm and—at most—about 20cm.

Another complaint is that I encourage readers to "look on the bright side" of global warming. I submit that looking at both the negative and positive impacts of climate change is reasonable. Rising temperatures will mean more heat waves, but the cold is a much bigger killer than the heat. By 2050, global warming will cause almost 400,000 more heat-related deaths each year. Yet at the same time, 1.8m fewer people will die from cold. In this respect, global warming will save lives. Cooling our fears of global warming is important, because our panic often seems to affect our abilities to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. Yes, we need to fix global warming in the long run. But we are blindly focusing on policies that will not achieve this.

. . .

From Lomborg, B. (2007) 'Changing the Climate Debate', Prospect *magazine (25 November 2007).*

Reflection: Undertaking this activity would first require some research on each of these publications. *The Sun* is a UK tabloid newspaper, with a reputation for courting popularity and focusing on entertainment alongside the reporting of news. *The Guardian*, on the other hand, is a broadsheet newspaper and seeks to maintain a reputation for accurate reporting of the news and well-informed argument, although it is still written and published for a mass audience. *Prospect*'s website describes itself as 'the leading magazine of ideas' and has a reputation for more intellectually demanding and specialised arguments in the field of politics, culture and economics.

Prospect's article is the only one with a named author: the others are issued under the authorship of the publication, so rely on their reputation in general. Bjorn Lomborg is described as adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, part of the University of Copenhagen, and the author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, a book published by Cambridge University Press, giving this source the highest level of **expertise**. None of the sources have the ability to observe directly, but this seems less relevant in this case, as they are also making arguments using secondary evidence.

The **vested interest** of *The Guardian* and *Prospect* seems to be in maintaining their reputation, although in the case of *The Sun* this is less clear. Research into other editorial pieces from this publication would reveal other arguments which are hostile to the European Union, so there seems to be an interest in maintaining this position. None of the sources are **neutral**: Lomborg argues for a 'middle ground' on how worried we should be about global warming caused by humans. *The Guardian* argues firmly that climate change is a problem and we need to do something about it, while weighing up evidence for and against the case that effective action is taking place. *The Sun* shows least neutrality, and is tightly focused on its case that controlling carbon dioxide emissions is less effective than river dredging as a response to climate change.

These findings are also reflected in the arguments and evidence of the sources themselves. *The Sun* relies on assertions to support its conclusion and provides no evidence, whereas both *The Guardian* and Lomborg in *Prospect* support their arguments with evidence, although they reach opposing conclusions. From this it is these two sources which are most useful, and applying the criteria enables us to select them as the strongest representatives of different sides of this debate. But just because *The Sun* is a less credible source on this topic does not mean that scepticism about climate change caused by humans is necessarily a weaker argument: Lomborg's case demonstrates this. Instead, we need to locate and make sense of the differences and similarities between the strongest arguments we can find, organising them into perspectives. Doing this is the focus of Chapter 3.

Summary

In this chapter we have:

- reviewed the different kinds of reading that it is necessary to do as a student, and made a distinction between reading as decoding and active reading where we analyse and evaluate texts
- identified the skill of active reading as part of the first stage of the Critical Path, which is deconstruction
- defined arguments as conclusions supported by reasons and explored the differences between arguments and other types of text
- learnt how to evaluate the structure of arguments, including making judgements about how the conclusion is supported by lines of argument and the presence of assumptions and inferential gaps
- explored longer and more complex arguments where intermediate conclusions are present
- identified the different kinds of evidence used to support arguments
- developed a list of questions to ask about evidence in arguments in order to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses
- explored the implications of the context of arguments, especially their authorship
- evaluated the context of a range of sources containing arguments, applying credibility criteria.

It is important to recognise that we have been largely focusing on single sources in this chapter, learning to apply the tools of active reading, or deconstruction, to evaluate the structure of their arguments, their use of evidence and their context as sources. This is a useful starting point for the skills you need to develop as a Global Perspectives & Research student, and the longer question has given you the opportunity to practise them further.

The next stage will be to compare and group arguments more precisely into perspectives so that you can evaluate debates more broadly and reach conclusions. You will still be using the skills of deconstruction to weigh up arguments we have learnt in this chapter, but you will be aiming to make larger judgements about debates. This will be done individually, but also in collaboration with other students, and you will also learn how to communicate your findings in essays and presentations, rather than just in response to shorter questions.

Practising deconstruction

This section of the chapter is divided into three: firstly, developing deconstruction, secondly, establishing deconstruction and finally, enhancing deconstruction. Each section focuses on the active reading skill of deconstruction, but is also designed to build on the one before. You can either work through each section in turn or choose the section that you feel is at the most appropriate level for you. You should see a progression of difficulty through the three levels, but they are also linked in this chapter to the skills we have established at this stage of the Critical Path.

These sections use the topic of **Migration and Work**, one of the topics listed in the Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research syllabus. However, you should be able to employ the principles of your learning here to a wide variety of other topics in the research you do and examination questions you answer.

Developing deconstruction

Read this source and answer the questions that follow.

Document 1

Here are the three biggest threats to the world right now

This article was published in *The Telegraph*, a UK newspaper, on 14 January 2016. Mehreen Khan is a business reporter. She writes on economics, the eurozone and global finance.

> Ahead of its annual meeting at Davos next week, the World Economic Forum has released its yearly assessment of the biggest dangers facing the world over the next decade.
>
> Large-scale migration is the global threat most likely to materialise over the next 18 months.
>
> More than 50pc of respondents said the involuntary mass movement of people seen over the last year would continue to be the chief source of instability in the world, over and above natural disasters and state conflict.
>
> Over 60 million refugees – equivalent to the population of the UK – were displaced from their homes last year alone, compared to just 40 million in the aftermath of the Second World War.
>
> . . .

1 Identify the conclusion of this argument.
2 Explain the two main reasons supporting this conclusion.
3 Identify the evidence that is used to support the conclusion.
4 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence in supporting the conclusion.
5 Assess the credibility of the writer.
6 Overall, how convincing do you find this argument?

Establishing deconstruction

Read this source and answer the questions that follow.

Document 2

> The world is undergoing a major population shift that will reshape economic development for decades.
>
> That's the view of the World Bank and the IMF. . . .
>
> "With the right set of policies, this era of demographic change can be an engine of economic growth," said World Bank group president, Jim Yong Kim. This presents an understandable challenge to politicians who tend not to think much further ahead than the next election, but the facts are stark. More than 90 per cent of global poverty is concentrated in low-income countries with a young population, while more than three-quarters of global growth is generated in richer nations with rising life expectancies. Against this backdrop, the movement of people becomes not just understandable, but predictable. In Sub-Saharan Africa, now suffering from a withdrawal of Chinese investment and fragile economies, the median age is just 18. Europe's focus might be on refugees, but the conditions facilitating a surge in economic migration are undeniable. Many identify Germany's openness to refugees as a response to its looming demographic pressures. By 2030, in EU countries, there will be around 2.5 people of working age for every pensioner. Faced with this reality, European nations would do well to heed the World Bank's advice that "freer cross-border flows of trade, investment, and people can help manage demographic imbalances". . . .
>
> Migration is now a fact of life . . . deal with it.
>
> This article was published in *City A.M.*, a UK newspaper, on 9 October 2015.

This document argues that there is a population shift from areas of global poverty which have low incomes and young populations to areas of global growth which are richer and have rising life expectancies.

1 Identify the reasons used to support this conclusion.

2 Identify the evidence used to support this conclusion.

3 Explain any assumptions which are required to accept the conclusion.

4 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this argument.

Enhancing deconstruction

Write your own argument giving your view of migration. You should make sure you include:

- a conclusion
- reasons, with at least one line of argument
- evidence.

When you have finished, exchange your argument with someone else in your class, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your arguments and evidence. You could also list the assumptions each of you has made.

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David Towsey

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