

## TheTECEP® Test Description for PHI-130-TE

### INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL REASONING

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This exam assesses students' critical-thinking tools to analyze and evaluate knowledge claims. It evaluates students' skills to critically assess cultural stereotypes and biases through readings, web resources, and other sources of information. Critical reasoning tools are crucial to making informed decisions and applying appropriate reasoning when faced with difficult situations in professional or personal experiences. The skills and knowledge assessed on this exam are applicable in other disciplines including psychology, history, English, political science, communication science, healthcare, development studies, sociology, and public administration. (3 credits)

- **Test format:**
    - 30 multiple choice questions (1 point each)
    - 10 matching questions (1 point each)
    - 1 essay: create a valid argument (20 points)
    - 1 essay: critique an argument (20 points)
  - **Passing score:** 70% (56/80 points). Your grade will be reported as CR (credit) or NC (no credit).
  - **Time limit:** 2 hours.
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### OUTCOMES ASSESSED ON THE TEST

- Identify assumptions, reasons, claims, and the interactions among them.
  - Make informed, logical decisions based on facts and substantiated claims.
  - Identify biases, misconceptions, and preconceived ideas that affect decision-making.
  - Evaluate information and knowledge claims critically.
  - Apply critical reasoning concepts to constructing arguments and essay.
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### TOPICS ON THE TEST AND THEIR APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION

The table below indicates the main topics covered by this exam and the approximate percentage of the exam devoted to each main topic. Under the main topic heading is a list of related—but more



specific–topics. It is important to review these topics to determine how much prior knowledge you have and/or how much additional study is necessary.

Topic	Percentage
<p><b>Introduction to Critical Reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What critical reasoning is</li> <li>● Independent thinking</li> <li>● Informed thinking</li> <li>● Critical self-reflection</li> </ul>	(20%)
<p><b>Identifying and Analyzing Arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What an argument is</li> <li>● Analyzing arguments: premises and conclusions</li> <li>● The structure of arguments</li> </ul>	(20%)
<p><b>Obstacles to Clear Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preconceived ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ social conditioning</li> <li>○ labeling</li> <li>○ stereotypes</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Fallacies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ slippery slope</li> <li>○ straw man argument</li> <li>○ begging the question</li> <li>○ equivocation</li> <li>○ complex question</li> <li>○ faulty analogy</li> <li>○ ad hominem argument</li> <li>○ false appeal to authority</li> <li>○ false dilemma</li> <li>○ hasty generalization</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	(20%)
<p><b>Evaluating Arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Different types of arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ empirical</li> <li>○ value</li> <li>○ distinguishing between deductive and inductive arguments</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Applying knowledge and skills to evaluate arguments</li> </ul>	(20%)
<p><b>Constructing and Reflecting on Arguments in Different Kinds of Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Different kinds of writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ expressive</li> <li>○ communicative</li> <li>○ journals</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Writing argumentative essays</li> <li>● The philosophical attitude</li> </ul>	(20%)



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## STUDY MATERIALS

This is a comprehensive list of the materials used in this test description. We encourage you to explore these resources to make sure that you are familiar with multiple perspectives on the topics above.

OERu is an organization that provides free educational resources to students. Thomas Edison has adapted a [Critical Reasoning course](#) developed by UNISA, an OERu partner, and made it available at no charge on the University website. The course is a self-paced, non-credit course that will prepare you to take this TECEP exam to earn credit.

You can also prepare for this TECEP using other college-level resources in this subject. If you choose other resources, compare their content to the topic outline on the first page, to make sure all topics are covered. Below are a few suggestions you may find helpful. Use either the current or the previous edition.

Title
Paul, R., & Elder, L. <i>Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life</i> (current edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.
Cavender, N., & Kahane, H. <i>Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric: The Use of Reason in Everyday Life</i> (current edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.
Paul, R., & Elder, L. <i>Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools</i> (current edition). Foundation for Critical Thinking.
Teays, W. <i>Second Thoughts: Critical Thinking for a Diverse Society</i> (current edition). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

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## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The questions below are designed to help you study for your TECEP. Answering these questions does not guarantee a passing score on your exam.

Please note that the questions below **will not** appear on your exam.



## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Dogma is information that is
  - a. believed without question
  - b. passed on from person to person
  - c. unintentionally distorted
  - d. unquestionably true
  
2. What is the primary purpose of an argumentative essay?
  - a. To make the logic unambiguous
  - b. To sway the reader
  - c. To reply to possible opposition
  - d. To offer a strong thesis
  
3. Which of the following is NOT an inductive argument?
  - a. The Amazon rainforests contain medicinal plants not yet discovered by Western medicine. Cutting down the rainforests destroys possible sources of medical discovery. We should not cut down Amazon rainforests.
  - b. Bubonic plague is carried by fleas on rats. Fleas were found on rats carried on ships when the ships came into port. The source of the plague in the port cities was the rats on the ships.
  - c. Harvard requires an undergraduate degree for admission to their Ph.D. programs. If you want a Ph.D. from Harvard you will need an undergraduate degree.
  - d. All doctors have bad handwriting. Ben is a doctor, therefore Ben has bad handwriting.

## Matching Questions

You will be asked to match an example of a type of fallacy or type of argument with its description

4. You should drink BestRoast coffee. My roommate says it's great, and she is an engineer. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Equivocation
  - b. Straw man argument
  - c. False appeal to authority
  - d. Ad hominem argument
  - e. Faulty analogy
  - f. Complex question
  - g. False dichotomy
  - h. Slippery slope
  - i. Begging the question
  - j. Hasty generalization
  
5. Buying insurance is no different from betting on a football team. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Equivocation
  - b. Straw man argument
  - c. False appeal to authority
  - d. Ad hominem argument
  - e. Faulty analogy
  - f. Complex question
  - g. False dichotomy
  - h. Slippery slope
  - i. Begging the question
  - j. Hasty generalization



## Create an Argument

6. Choose **one** of the topics below and create a persuasive analytic argument. Your argument should be logically developed and well organized. You may take any position you want, but remember that a valid argument must include the following characteristics: clear premises, evidence and relevant examples that support the premises, as well as consideration of opposing points of view and the reasons they are not valid.
- Adoptees should have full access to their birth records, regardless of their birth parents' wishes.
  - A mandatory one-year period of national service should be required when students graduate high school or reach the age of 18.

## Evaluate an Argument

7. Evaluate the argument below. Instead of just agreeing or disagreeing with the position taken, discuss the soundness of its logic and how well-reasoned it is. A good critique should identify flaws, use examples and logical argument to agree or disagree with the position, and be well-organized and logically developed.

*All professional athletes use performance enhancing drugs, so why should anyone single out Lance Armstrong for punishment? His achievements should not be scorned, and he should remain on the books as the best cyclist in history, with his seven successive wins of the Tour de France.*



## ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. (a)
2. (b)
3. (d)
4. (c)
5. (e)

The graders will be looking for the following features of your writing for questions 6 and 7:

Criteria	Points
Your explanation of the issues.	<b>4 points</b>
Using the correct logical form.	<b>4 points</b>
Stating your position clearly and including the influence of context and assumptions.	<b>4 points</b>
Including sufficient and relevant evidence.	<b>4 points</b>
Your conclusions follow from the premises and are clearly stated.	<b>4 points</b>

