

GAC015 Academic English III: Reading & Writing Skills

GAC015-aligned critical reading, source evaluation and essay practice; the centre's brief sets the requirements.

Critical reading through to the essay

GAC015 develops critical reading, source evaluation, logical argument, an annotated bibliography and the in-depth academic essay.

Two documents, two jobs

- An annotated bibliography evaluates sources for a question.
- An essay connects their evidence within an argument.
- The six sheets use original fictional reports and cards as classroom practice.
- Do not submit these fictional records as real educational, medical, legal or policy evidence.

Your turn: the fictional card

Your turn

In real coursework, how should a supplied fictional card be referenced?

- A. As a real journal article with an invented author
- B. With its honest fictional label and section locator, as classroom practice
- C. It cannot be mentioned at all
- D. As personal communication with the teacher

Critical reading, analytical reading, assumptions

Move	What it does
Critical reading	Identifies what the author wants accepted, and tests the support
Analytical reading	Separates issue, claim, evidence, reasoning and limitations
An assumption	A premise the argument depends on — explicit or unstated

Use the evidence

Do not invent an assumption simply to criticise it.

Worked example: workshop attendees, means of seven and six

- 1 **Read the design** Fictional Report E compares thirty optional workshop attendees with thirty non-attendees; later means are seven and six out of ten.
- 2 **Find the gaps** Earlier scores were not compared; attendees reported more revision time; individual before-and-after scores are missing.
- 3 **Name the assumptions** The recommendation of compulsory attendance for every score depends on unestablished causal and individual-benefit assumptions.
- 4 **Critique proportionately** A fair response acknowledges possible usefulness while rejecting a guaranteed universal effect — without accusing the author of fabricating scores.

Decision

A mean difference is not every attendee improving by one point.

The analytical response task

- 150–180 words with accurate source labels and evidence limits.
- A fair counterargument and a proportionate recommendation.
- Further evaluation can be proposed without being misreported as a completed study.

Select a source for the claim it can support

Check, on the source	The question you ask
Question and outcome	What does it actually measure?
Participants and method	Who, how many, and how?
Comparison	Compared with what, under which conditions?
Limitations and trail	What is missing, and where did it come from?

Use the evidence

A peer-reviewed label alone does not guarantee relevance, validity or an appropriate conclusion.

Worked source selection: O, A and R

- 1 **Observation O** Ten missed appointments out of fifty before reminders, six out of fifty afterwards; different months and unrecorded group differences prevent isolating a reminder effect.
- 2 **Advertisement A** Asserts improved care without a method — a promotional assertion, not independent proof.
- 3 **Methods R** Proposes consistent measurement and a specified comparison; guidance, not a completed experiment.
- 4 **Assign the roles** O and R support a limited attendance-investigation paragraph; A is discussed as an assertion.

Decision

Four fewer missed records are not four cures.

Keep the source trail while reading

- In actual research, verify author or organisation, title, publication details, date, locator and link against the original.
- Follow the required style when information is absent; do not invent it.
- For the supplied cards, use the honest fictional label and section locator.

Warrant: why this fact supports that action

A warrant explains why a fact supports a proposed action — evidence describing a problem does not automatically show the preferred solution will work.

Worked example: the makerspace log

- 1 Read the record** A four-week log: forty bookings, six unused slots, four equipment conflicts (L, §1).
- 2 Refuse the hidden count** It does not establish ten different affected users; overlap and identity are unknown.
- 3 State the proposal with its status** Confirming bookings may help test whether unneeded time can be released (P, §1) — no trial has occurred.
- 4 Answer the real objection** Some users may not check email daily (S, §1); do not replace that access concern with "students hate every rule".

Decision

A conditional trial argument names its evaluation criteria: access, conflicts, manageable effort.

Your turn: the hidden user count

Your turn

The log shows six unused slots and four conflicts. Can you claim ten different users were affected?

- A. Yes, six plus four is ten
- B. No; overlap and identity are unknown, so the distinct count cannot be established
- C. Yes, if the log is digital
- D. No, because conflicts are always the same person

Different sources inform different parts

- Keep populations, methods and outcomes visible instead of merging them into an unsupported total.
- A preference count can inform a convenience question without settling the weight for access needs or staffing.

Worked example: two samples, one service

- 1 **Source S** Thirty of forty voluntary online respondents prefer digital booking (S, §1).
- 2 **Source L** Eight of twenty logged desk visitors request help in one week (L, §1).
- 3 **Guard the arithmetic** The samples may overlap, so thirty plus eight is not a count of distinct people; neither 75% nor 40% describes all service users.
- 4 **Source N and the synthesis** A staffing-time concern for a telephone route (N, §1) is not a cost estimate; propose investigating an online route with accessible assistance.

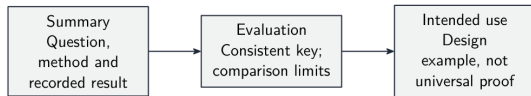
Decision

A voluntary majority does not justify an invented universal approval.

Synthesis retains credit, overlap and objection

Synthesis connects the contributions to a conditional recommendation — convenience, access and resources interact.

What an annotation adds



- An annotation adds a faithful summary, question-specific evaluation and intended use to a reference.
- It may identify a claim for which a source should not be used.
- Neither praise nor a fixed word count establishes a good annotation.
- Read the relevant complete source and follow the assignment's actual format.

Worked extended-source example: Report C

- 1 Read the design** Different groups of twelve volunteers view two notice versions on consecutive days; eight first-group and ten second-group readers answer all four details correctly (§2).
- 2 Hold the comparison limits** Layout and wording change together; convenience recruitment, different participants and days limit the comparison.
- 3 Keep what the shared key supports** A consistent scoring procedure — not reliability across repeated studies, and not a causal effect of layout.
- 4 Bound the uses** Missed details, later retention and attendance are unmeasured; the §3 follow-up is a proposal.

Decision

Use C as an evaluation-design example; reject it as proof that headings alone improve everyone's attendance.

For real coursework, read what you cite

- Retrieve in-depth appropriate texts; check bibliographic details; locate each finding.
- Compare sources' contributions and limits for the actual question.
- Do not cite a text you have not read, or invent its author or publication.

Narrow the question, then the thesis

- Narrow the question before collecting sources.
- A thesis should answer it with conditions the evidence can support.
- An evidence matrix organises themes, source contributions and missing information before paragraphs are written.
- The plan's length and order follow the argument and the actual brief — not a six-paragraph rule.

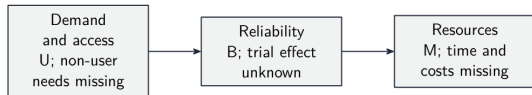
Worked evidence matrix: the shared-equipment question

Theme	Source, contribution
Demand	U: interest from twenty of thirty voluntary current users
Reliability	B: six double bookings in forty requests
Resources	M: cleaning, repair, replacement — no cost or staffing estimates
Missing	Non-user needs, frequency, waiting, abandoned attempts, costs

Use the evidence

Interest alone does not justify expansion without workable access and maintenance.

The model essay and its honesty



- The local 650–800 word task includes a complete 699-word model.
- A conditional thesis, connected source reasoning, a fair counterargument, proposed evaluation, honest local source entries.
- The model does not approve a trial or claim measured results.

Revise the argument before the commas

- Revise the argument and structure first; then review source accuracy, references and language.
- If a sentence reveals a reasoning problem, return to the argument rather than following an inflexible editing order.
- Reading aloud can help identify unclear phrasing; it neither has a guaranteed duration nor replaces source and logic checks.
- Finish with a conclusion that answers the focused question without new invented evidence.

Your turn: the essay's last sentence

Your turn

Which ending fits an essay whose evidence supports only a limited trial?

- A. The programme should be adopted across the school immediately
- B. A limited trial with recorded use and access feedback should decide whether the programme continues
- C. More research is needed, so no conclusion is possible
- D. The trial has already succeeded according to the sources

Check yourself

- What two assumptions does the compulsory-attendance recommendation depend on?
- Why is "thirty plus eight" not a count of distinct people?
- What three things does an annotation add to a reference?
- What belongs in the missing row of an evidence matrix?