

**CSUEB GENERAL EDUCATION**  
**AREA A3 CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC**

**Description:** The primary purpose of a GE Area A3 course is to build a specific toolset that allows students to rigorously explore reasoning and its presentation. Proficiency in critical thinking at the A3 level is demonstrated by the identification, analysis, evaluation, and presentation of arguments (deductive and inductive). Emphasis is on the understanding of fallacies and the role of language in argumentation.

**Framing Language:** This rubric is used to assess signature (comprehensive) assignments that are aligned to the A3 Critical Thinking rubric. Each dimension, listed in order of importance, must be covered and should be assessed independently even though they are linked and may not stand alone. A single question might cover multiple dimensions. While the dimensions are specific, the performance descriptors allow for a variety of assignment forms. Levels are a product of complexity and/or consistency of the student’s work.

**Development:** This A3 rubric was developed in November 2019 by faculty members in the Department of Philosophy in collaboration with the Office of General Education and will be used for a pilot assessment of GE Area A3 in May 2020.

DIMENSION	PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS BY LEVEL			
	4	3	2	1
<b>Argumentation/Reasoning</b> <i>Understands the structure and purpose of an argument, the logical relationships between the parts (explicit and implicit) and evaluates the argument.</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of arguments.	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of arguments.	Demonstrates some understanding of arguments but with major gaps/errors.	Demonstrates little to no understanding of arguments.
<b>Deductive Reasoning</b> <i>Understands arguments intended to reason with certainty or necessity and evaluates them in terms of validity and soundness.</i>  <i>This includes the use of formal systems (e.g., propositional logic, predicate logic, syllogistic logic) and/or informal systems (e.g., mathematical reasoning, argument by definition).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of deductive reasoning.	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of deductive reasoning.	Demonstrates some understanding of deductive reasoning but with major gaps/errors.	Demonstrates little to no understanding of deductive reasoning.

<p><b>Inductive Reasoning</b>  <i>Understands arguments intended to reason without necessity or certainty and evaluates them in terms of strength and cogency.</i></p> <p><i>This includes reasoning such as causal analyses, arguments from analogy, generalizations, appeals to authority, predictions, and/or abductive reasoning.</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates a thorough understanding of inductive reasoning.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an adequate understanding of inductive reasoning.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some understanding of inductive reasoning but with major gaps/errors.</p>	<p>Demonstrates little to no understanding of inductive reasoning.</p>
<p><b>Language</b>  <i>Understands the role of language in argumentation (e.g., factual and value claims, vagueness and ambiguity; cognitive and emotive meaning; definitions; implicit and explicit communication).</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the role of language in argumentation.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the role of language in argumentation.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some understanding of the role of language in argumentation but with major gaps/errors.</p>	<p>Demonstrates little to no understanding of the role of language in argumentation.</p>
<p><b>Fallacies</b>  <i>Understands common errors in reasoning (e.g., ad hominem, slippery slope, bias, strawman, equivocation, no true Scotsman, false cause).</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates a thorough understanding of fallacies.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an adequate understanding of fallacies.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some understanding of fallacies but with major gaps/errors.</p>	<p>Demonstrates little to no understanding of fallacies.</p>