

Thinking CRITICALLY

World Issues

for **READING, WRITING,**
and **RESEARCH**

Myra Shulman

MICHIGAN

Thinking Critically

World Issues for Reading, Writing, and Research

Myra Shulman

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Thinking Critically

To Mother

Preface

Thinking Critically: Word Issues for Reading, Writing, and Research is designed for students who want to improve their general fluency in English while expanding their knowledge of major issues in the news in the United States and abroad. It contains authentic articles from online news sites, magazines, journals, and newspapers. These articles, which include factual news reports as well as editorials, are challenging but accessible. Although the readings were all written in 2002 and 2003, they raise issues that are likely to remain relevant into the foreseeable future. These issues range from the enduring conflict between India and Pakistan to intriguing research into the benefits of sleep. Each chapter has two or three articles, a glossary of difficult words and discussion questions, a vocabulary task, research and writing activities, a debate or a role play, a critical thinking task, and suggested websites and books.

Through reading, talking, and writing about news from around the world, students will become familiar with a variety of news media and journalistic approaches. Thus, they will learn to look at the media from a knowledgeable perspective as they discuss and assess the content, style, and tone of the articles. Furthermore, students will gain confidence in using new vocabulary words when speaking and writing about contemporary concerns. Finally, students are challenged to think critically about social, economic, and political issues. They will analyze and synthesize information, draw inferences, form interpretations, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of public issues.

The overall goals of this textbook are to improve linguistic competence, critical thinking, and awareness of global issues. The specific objectives of this text are the following:

- to increase competence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking;
- to strengthen analytical ability;
- to enhance skills in online research;
- to improve ability to guess the meaning of words from the context;
- to enlarge active vocabulary; and
- to expand knowledge of contemporary issues.

One of the important objectives of *Thinking Critically* is vocabulary expansion. For that reason, I have included a glossary after each article. The glossary contains key concept words, the words that students need to

understand the reading. It also includes academic and technical vocabulary that is essential to the meaning of each article. The vocabulary task in every chapter reinforces students' vocabulary while providing in-depth information on the topic.

This text actively involves students in the language learning process. Through a combination of group work and individual assignments, students will acquire these practical skills:

- reading and discussing authentic articles from various news sources;
- doing research on the Internet;
- writing documents in academic or business style;
- debating a controversial issue;
- conducting a public opinion poll;
- making oral presentations;
- building a news file of current articles on relevant issues;
- performing role plays of realistic scenarios; and
- analyzing a public policy.

Thinking Critically presents a cross-section of themes and issues central to our experience today. Most of the articles raise questions rather than offering answers, and the discussion questions encourage readers to consider a topic from different points of view. The Thinking about It task calls on students' ability to evaluate a complex issue with objectivity and to propose a realistic approach. Therefore, this textbook is good preparation for academic courses, in which students are required to use their critical thinking skills in expressing their opinions, both orally and in writing. Because the text focuses on contemporary issues and public policies of concern to citizens of our global society, I hope it will inspire lively discussions and help shape an interactive learning environment.

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As always, I benefited from the support and suggestions of my colleagues, friends and family, and in particular my brother David and my husband K. It is their wide-ranging knowledge of government, politics, economics, and international relations that provided the foundation for this textbook.

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