

**Part I. *Opening Doors* Textbook**  
**This packet is broken into several sections.**



- FACT VS. OPINION:** Read p. 546-550 about critical thinking and **distinguishing fact from opinion**. Do the following exercises by writing one complete sentence using each of the words indicated in a factual way and one complete sentence using them as an opinion. These words come from the readings from *Opening Doors*. The first set is an example.

**1. façade**

- a. Fact: The façade of the building was made out of brick and featured a balcony and three windows.
- b. Opinion: The façade of the building was the ugliest I had ever seen; the bricks were painted yellow!

**2. Islamic**

- a. Fact: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. mortality**

- a. Fact: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. free market**

- a. Fact: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. deviant**

- a. Fact: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

- Write **fact** if the sentence is a fact. Write **opinion** if the sentence is an opinion.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is not necessary to brush your teeth more than once a day.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ President Woodrow Wilson established the League of Nations.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ The gardener chased the rabbits out of his cabbage field.

- INFERENCES AND CONCLUSIONS:** Read p. 554-558 about critical thinking and **inferences and conclusions**. Do the following exercises by first reading the information the author supplies and then making an inference (drawing a conclusion) that answers the question that follows. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. James licked the final square, posted it at the top corner of the envelope and dropped it in the large blue box. He hoped it would get there in time. Nobody likes a late birthday message.

**What is James doing?** *Mailing a birthday card that for some reason requires more than one stamp (because the author said he licked the “final square,” implying multiple stamps – or “squares”).*

2. I just can't figure them out. Sometimes I get so frustrated. Like when I ask the file to save, and I come back an hour later and it has erased my paper. Those are the things that just irritate me. I also can't stand all these goofy names, 'mouse', 'web surfing.' Whoever made up such nonsense?

**What is frustrating this man?**

3. Maurice loved the feeling of being launched at such fast speeds. He looked forward to the twists and turns, and the upside down loops. The park had gotten so expensive that his family could afford to go only once a year, so Maurice would count down the days until he could feel his hair blowing in the wind as he raced around the track.

**Where does Maurice's family go once a year?**

4. Of all the chores Tavon had around the house, it was his least favorite. Folding the laundry was fine, doing the dishes, that was alright. But he couldn't stand hauling the large bags over to the giant silver canisters. He hated the smell and the possibility of rats. It was disgusting.

**What chore does Tavon hate?**

- EVALUATING AUTHORS' ARGUMENTS:** Read p. 562-566 about critical thinking and **evaluating authors' arguments**. We will try to do some or all of the “Stop and Annotate” examples on p. 566-571, but if we don't, you should do those on your own. In addition, do the reading as assigned below:

1. Read “Sport Utility Vehicles,” on p. 602-604, **highlighting the reading as you go**.
2. Before you read, **briefly describe what steps you will take to prepare yourself to read this section**. You don't have to follow what the book says on p. 601. Just describe what method(s) *you* will use for *this* reading *this* week.

- As you read, answer the critical thinking questions below.

**1a. Does the author present a fact or opinion in ¶10, p. 603?**

**1b. Explain your answer.**

- 2a. In ¶13 on p. 603, what *conclusion* can you draw about Senator Lugar's position on SUV's?
- 2b. Explain your answer.

**The following are the standard steps in evaluating an author's argument. Your goal is to be able to do this with any piece of reading.**

- 1. What is the *issue* this reading is about? To answer this, ask yourself: "What controversial topic is this reading about?"** Generally, with this kind of material, the author is trying to argue a point. He or she has a *thesis*, a point he or she wants to persuasively argue. Examples of controversial topics about which authors (and readers) might try to argue are abortion, the death penalty, legalizing marijuana, protecting the spotted owl, etc.
- 2. What is the author's argument? To answer this, ask yourself: "What is the author's *point of view, position, and/or bias* about the controversial topic?"** Although an author may choose to take a neutral position and present just the facts, leaving readers to decide for themselves, often the author of a persuasive piece will take a position and try to persuade readers to agree with him or her. For example, an author might write a piece that is anti-abortion, pro death penalty, against the legalization of marijuana, opposed to protection of certain endangered species, etc. You need to be a detective to find out where the author is coming from.
- 3. What are the author's assumptions?** These are factors that the author takes for granted, that he or she assumes to be true – without offering specific evidence. Suppose an author argues that an advantage of the death penalty is that it serves as a deterrent to crime, that is, that potential criminals will not commit crimes that carry the death penalty because they would fear having that penalty themselves. A primary assumption here is that potential criminals pay attention to the enactment of the death penalty, that they know that it's a potential penalty for a crime they might commit, and that knowledge of the death penalty is enough to keep them from committing a crime – when in fact even if they know the death penalty could be imposed, they might not care and go ahead and commit the crime anyway. There is an assumption here that such criminals *care* in the first place about whether they live or die. And that may simply not be true.
- 4. What types of support does the author offer for his or her position?** Here, you need to look at the supporting details and ask what kinds of support they provide for the author's argument. So, if the author is arguing that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime, we might expect the author to provide statistics, expert opinion, interview results, and other facts and evidence that could bolster his or her case.
- 5. Does the support relate directly to the author's argument?** It's really important that the support an author offers is directly relevant to his or her argument. In the death penalty argument, if the author argued that victims' families felt safer, that argument – while perhaps true – doesn't really have anything to do with the author's argument that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime.

**6. Is the author’s argument objective and complete?** This means that the author’s argument is based on facts not on opinion. It also means that the author hasn’t left out any important information that might actually weaken his or her argument. If we found out that the author’s sister was murdered by a felon who received a sentence of life without parole – but not an actual death penalty – this information begins to weaken the author’s argument because it shows that he or she is probably not being objective. Furthermore, the author might actually know of studies that show that in fact there is a very weak connection between criminals’ awareness of the death penalty and the likelihood that they will commit a serious crime – but the author doesn’t mention any of those studies in his/her argument. That makes the argument incomplete.

**7. Is the argument valid and credible?** The validity of an argument is based on how well the author reasoned it correctly and logically, based on the information and evidence. To figure this out, examine your answers to the questions about assumptions, types of support, whether the support relates directly to the argument, and whether it is objective and complete. If the answer to those four questions is “yes” or even “mostly yes,” then the argument is probably valid and, therefore, logical. Whether the argument is credible means, simply, is it believable? If it’s valid and logical, it probably is believable. But, you may come across points that are very well argued, but in the end just don’t convince you. You might agree with most of the author’s argument in support of the death penalty, finding it mostly objective and complete, and pretty logical – but in the end, you just aren’t convinced that the death penalty will in fact result in fewer serious crimes. Usually, if an argument is very strong and valid, it will be credible, but if there are weaknesses and omissions here and there, it becomes harder to believe in the author’s position. This is what critical thinking is all about!

**Reading Selection Quiz:** Answer the **Reading Selection Quiz** questions on **p. 605-610** below.

- |          |           |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| _____ 1. | _____ 6.  | _____ 11. | _____ 16. | _____ 21. |
| _____ 2. | _____ 7.  | _____ 12. | _____ 17. | _____ 22. |
| _____ 3. | _____ 8.  | _____ 13. | _____ 18. | _____ 23. |
| _____ 4. | _____ 9.  | _____ 14. | _____ 19. | _____ 24. |
| _____ 5. | _____ 10. | _____ 15. | _____ 20. | _____ 25. |

**What is the overall main idea of this selection? Be sure to answer this question in one sentence, using the topic SUVs.**

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**The author presents three reasons to own or drive an SUV. Present three arguments in support of owning or driving SUVs.**

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**Are you personally supportive of or opposed to owning & driving an SUV? Was your opinion affected by what you read?**

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