Pre and Post-Test on Critical Thinking

The purpose of this exercise is to introduce students to the concept of critical thinking and to assess their understanding of concepts prior to instruction. The exercise may provide a platform for discussion throughout the course, and may be used to test students’ understanding at the end of the course.

Directions: Circle the response that represents the best answer.

1. What is meant by the term “interests at stake?”
   a. The motivation people experience when they think critically
   b. The rules governing proper instruction
   c. The potential outcomes and objectives of actions
   d. The ability to balance a budget for education

2. Which statement best represents what is known about conscience?
   a. It regards a specific region of the brain
   b. It is fixed at birth by genetic material at conception
   c. It concerns the principles that guide moral decision-making
   d. It functions in direct proportion to one’s literacy skills

3. The difference between an element of critical thinking and a standard of critical thinking is:
   a. An element regards a structural aspect of reasoning and a standard regards the quality of reasoning
   b. An element regards the data used in reasoning and a standard regards the source of the data
   c. An element regards the mental process of reasoning and a standard regards goals and benchmarks of reasoning
   d. An element regards cognitive processes of an individual and a standard regards cognitive processes of a group

4. Which statement is an example of deductive reasoning?
   a. Heat causes water to evaporate, therefore global warming may lead to draught
   b. The escaped convict has family north of the jail and fresh footprints on the dirt road near his family’s home matched the size and shape of the shoes worn by prisoners, therefore the prisoner is going to his family
   c. All the buildings we saw on campus were built after 1998, therefore all the buildings on the campus are new
   d. The student studied for hours yet failed the exam, thus it was not his fault that he failed

5. Which statement is an example of inductive reasoning?
   a. Packaged food that is past its expiration date often contains high levels of toxins; people who eat expired food are probably going to get sick
   b. One plus two plus three plus four equals ten
   c. Lab tests indicated the presence of kerosene on charred floorboards and the inspector found two broken jars in the debris and concluded the fire was deliberately set
   d. Historians tend to be well-educated, thus historians do not understand people who never went to school
6. The question of relevance is essential concerned with:
   a. Whether someone has all the fact they need to make assertions
   b. Whether somebody is qualified to speak on a given subject as an expert
   c. Whether arguments offered are related to the issues in a debate
   d. Whether the logic between claims is weak or strong

7. What is a syllogism?
   a. A form of reasoning involving a conclusion based on two presumptions
   b. A conclusion that has been based on prior experience
   c. An argument that uses its own conclusion as its own evidence
   d. An argument that relies on partially revealed facts

8. The condition of open-mindedness is characterized primarily by:
   a. A willingness to change one’s mind if it is in one’s self-interest
   b. A disposition that tolerates the expression of diverse opinion and alternatives
   c. A capacity to suspend judgment about something until all information is considered
   d. An ability to take any position in an argument

9. Which statement best makes the case for the importance of critical thinking in a democracy?
   a. Critical thinking is used primarily in the acquisition and retention of employment
   b. Critical thinking is helpful in getting through public schools
   c. Critical thinking is important when making decisions in the market as a consumer
   d. Critical thinking is necessary to determine whether laws and policies are exploitative

10. Whereas skepticism is ______, reactionaries tend to be ________:
    a. Very negative about diverse opinions/very positive about diverse opinions
    b. Judgmental by nature/gullible and easy to deceive
    c. Suspicious about assertions/unwilling to be open to change or liberal thinking
    d. Certain that eventually truth will emerge/convinced that truth is always relative

11. Whereas _____ represents a cognitive task associated with critical thinking, _____ represents a metacognitive task:
    a. Identifying the purpose of a report/questioning the depth of one’s comprehension
    b. Reading one account of an event/reading several accounts of the same event
    c. Reading text, charts, and graphs/summarizing and replicating data
    d. Being sensitive to one’s reaction to assertions/Determining the relevance of claims

12. A historian who claims that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was like Stalin’s incarceration and execution of thousands during his purges is probably committing an act of:
    a. Fallacy of false analogy
    b. Fallacy of probability
    c. Fallacy of repetition
    d. Fallacy of correlation

13. An 20-year old activist who claims that native Americans never stood up for their rights is probably committing an act of:
    a. Fallacy of circular reasoning
    b. Fallacy of authority
    c. Fallacy of moralism
    d. Fallacy of regression
14. The term “formal logic” refers to:
   a. The abstract study of statements from which may be drawn reasonable conclusions
   b. The scientific analysis of language as a form of reason unto itself
   c. A study of the probabilities that something will happen if variables are just right
   d. The investigation of how people can be persuaded by propaganda

15. The term “implication” refers to:
   a. A set of assumptions made about people's behaviors and motives
   b. An argument that seems true even without the presentation of specific supports
   c. An argument that is vague and ambiguous in meaning
   d. An assertion that is reasonable as it follows the logic of previously accepted assertions

16. A primary source is:
   a. A summary of events used as a guide to researching events in a chronological order
   b. A written record or artifact that from the era and community that is the subject of research
   c. A document concerned with civic matters rather than matters of faith or superstition
   d. A document that represents the latest expert thinking on an issue from the past

17. What is a paradox?
   a. A question that is posed to prompt thinking and not necessary to get an answer
   b. A statement that relies on the emotional disposition of an audience for verification
   c. A statement that contradicts itself while being true at the same time
   d. A conclusion that has been unsuccessfully argued or proven

18. Whereas the authority of someone to speak as an expert on a specific topic refers to _____, the term _____ refers to the truthfulness about what that person says:
   a. Authority/believability
   b. Legality/morality
   c. Credibility/accuracy
   d. Peer review/public regard

19. Dissent refers to:
   a. The act of attacking others for what they believe
   b. The rejection of official policies and doctrines
   c. The degree to which the public shares consensus
   d. Actions taken to punish people who contradict authority

20. The statement “I have a right to my opinion, therefore my opinion is right” is an example of:
   a. A circular argument because the definition of “right” is the same in both premises
   b. An ambiguous argument because the word “right” is unclear in meaning
   c. An illogical argument because the condition of correctness is not predicated on the privilege of self-expression
   d. An example of empirical logic because hard evidence was offered to support the claim