**Point of View:**
*Frame of reference, perspectives, orientations*

All reasoning is done from some **point of view**.
- Identify your point of view.
- Seek other points of view and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Strive to be fair-minded in evaluating all points of view.

**Tips:**
- How am I looking at this situation? Is there another way to look that I should consider?
• What exactly am I focused on? And how am I seeing it?
• Is my view the only reasonable view? What does my point of view ignore?
• Have you ever considered the way ___ consider this?
• Which of these possible viewpoints makes the most sense?
• Am I having difficulty looking at this situation from a viewpoint with which I disagree?
• What is the point of view of the author of this story?

**Purpose:**

*Goal, objective*

All reasoning has a **purpose**.

• State your purpose clearly.
• Distinguish your purpose from related purposes.
• Check periodically to be sure you are still on target.
• Choose significant and realistic purposes.

**Tips:**

• What is your, my, their purpose in doing ______?
• What is the objective of this assignment (task, job, experiment, policy, strategy, etc.)?
• Should we question, refine, modify our purpose (goal, objective, etc.)?
• What is the purpose of this meeting (chapter, relationship, action)?
• What is your central aim in this line of thought?
• What is the purpose of education?
• Why did you say...?

**Question at Issue:**

*Problem, issue*

All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some **question**, solve some **problem**.

• State the question at issue clearly and precisely.
• Express the question in several ways to clarify its meaning and scope.
• Break the question into sub-questions.
• Distinguish questions that have definitive answers from those that are a matter of opinion and from those that require consideration of multiple viewpoints.

**Tips:**

• What is the question I am trying to answer?
• What important questions are embedded in the issue?
• Is there a better way to put the question?
• Is this question clear? Is it complex?
• I am not sure exactly what question you are asking. Could you explain it?
• The question in my mind is this: How do you see the question?
• What kind of question is this? Historical? Scientific? Ethical? Or...?
• What would we have to do to settle this question?

**Information:**
*Data, facts, observations, experiences*

All reasoning is based on **data, information**, and **evidence**.
• Restrict your claims to those supported by the data you have.
• Search for information that opposes your position, as well as information that supports it.
• Make sure that all information used is clear, accurate, and relevant to the question at issue.
• Make sure you have gathered sufficient information.

**Tips:**
• What information do I need to answer this question?
• What data are relevant to this problem?
• Do we need to gather more information?
• Is this information relevant to our purpose or goal?
• On what information are you basing that comment?
• What experience convinced you of this? Could your experience be distorted?
• How do we know this information (data, testimony) is accurate?
• Have we left out any important information that we need to consider?

**Interpretation & Inference:**
*Conclusions, solutions*

All reasoning contains **interpretations** or **inferences** by which we draw **conclusions** and give meaning to data.
• Infer only what the evidence implies.
• Check inferences for their consistency with each other.
• Identify assumptions that lead you to your inferences.

**Tips:**
• What conclusions am I coming to?
• Is my inference logical?
• Are there other conclusions I should consider?
• Does this interpretation make sense?
• Does our solution necessarily follow from our data?
• How did you reach that conclusion?
• What are you basing your reasoning on?
• Is there an alternative plausible conclusion?
• Given all the facts what is the best possible conclusion?
• How shall we interpret these data?

**Concepts:**
*Theories, definitions, axioms, laws, principles, models*

All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
• Identify key concepts and explain them clearly.
• Consider alternative concepts or alternative definitions of concepts.
• Make sure you are using concepts with care and precision.

**Tips:**
• What idea am I using in my thinking? Is this idea causing problems for me or for others?
• I think this is a good theory, but could you explain it more fully?
• What is the main hypothesis you are using in your reasoning?
• Are you using this term in keeping with established usage?
• What main distinctions should we draw in reasoning through this problem?
• What idea is this author using in his or her thinking? Is there a problem with it?

**Assumptions:**
*Presupposition, Taking for granted*

All reasoning is based on assumptions (beliefs you take for granted).
• Clearly identify your assumptions and determine whether they are justifiable.
• Consider how your assumptions are shaping your point of view.

**Tips:**
• What am I assuming or taking for granted?
• Am I assuming something I shouldn’t?
• What assumption is leading me to this conclusion?
• What is… (this policy, strategy, explanation) assuming?
• What exactly do sociologists (historians, mathematicians, etc.) take for granted?
• What is being presupposed in this theory?
• What are some important assumptions I make about my roommate, my friends, my parents, my instructors, my country?

**Implications & Consequences:**

All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.
• Trace the implications and consequences that follow from your reasoning.
• Search for negative as well as positive implications.
• Consider all possible consequences.

Tips:
• If I decide to do “X”, what things might happen?
• If I decide not to do “X”, what things might happen?
• What are you implying when you say that?
• What is likely to happen if we do this versus that?
• Are you implying that…?
• How significant are the implications of this decision?
• What, if anything, is implied by the fact that a much higher percentage of poor people are in jail than wealthy people?

Summary Questions Using Elements of Thought:

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<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>What am I trying to accomplish?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>What is my central aim?</td>
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<td>My purpose?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>What question am I raising?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What question am I addressing?</td>
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<td>Am I considering the complexities of the questions?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>What information am I using in coming to that conclusion?</th>
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<td>What experiences have I had to support this claim?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Inferences &amp; Conclusions</th>
<th>How did I reach this conclusion?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there another way to interpret the info?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>What is the main idea?</th>
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<td>Can I explain this idea?</td>
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<th>Implications &amp; Consequences</th>
<th>What am I implying?</th>
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<td>If someone accepted my position what would be the implication?</td>
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**Point of View**

From what point of view am I looking at the issue? Is there another point of view?