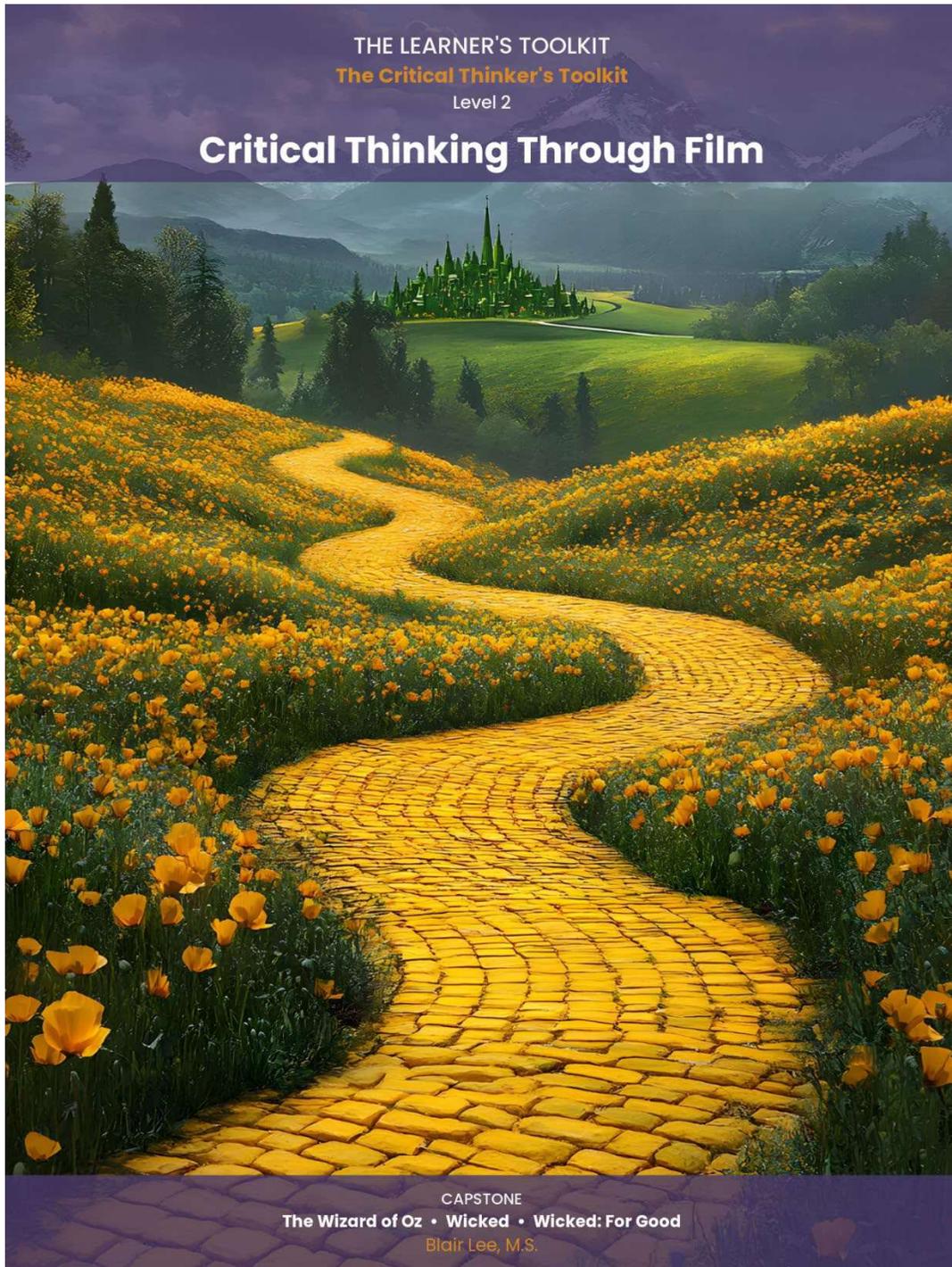


## Sample Answer Key – Capstone: Oz\*Wicked

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This sample has the answers for the questions in the Sample Student Workbook. It is included with the Teaching Guide in the course materials.



# Section 1 Answer Key

## *The Wizard of Oz*

### **Task 1: Evidence Quality**

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#### **Source Reliability: WEAK**

Glinda told you the witch was wicked. We do not know anything about Glinda. We do not know if she is trustworthy.

#### **Directness: WEAK**

We did not witness the witch doing anything. Glinda and the Munchkins repeat the label but offer no firsthand accounts of wickedness. Everything is secondhand— "she was wicked" without "here is what she did."

#### **Verifiability: WEAK**

The witch is dead, so her actions cannot be observed. No one describes specific verifiable harms. We cannot check anything.

#### **Consistency: WEAK (actually contradictory)**

Munchkinland looks prosperous, colorful, and happy. If she was oppressing them, where is the evidence of suffering? The appearance contradicts the "wicked ruler" claim.

#### **Completeness: VERY INCOMPLETE**

We never hear the witch's perspective. We never see what she actually did. We do not know the history. Critical information is missing.

#### **Overall Rating: WEAK**

The case against the Wicked Witch of the East has no real evidence. There are labels repeated by authority figures and a population that accepts those labels without verification. The physical evidence (prosperous Munchkinland) actually contradicts the claim. This is belief without knowledge.

## Culminating Task: Hypothesis Formation

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**Note: There is no single "right" answer. Here is an example of a strong response:**

### **Position:**

The Wicked Witch of the West might not be as wicked as the film wants us to believe. She does frightening things, but her anger seems understandable given what happened to her sister.

### **Evidence:**

- Her sister was just killed and everyone is celebrating
- Her sister's property was taken and given to a stranger without consent
- We never see her do anything wicked BEFORE her sister's death — all her "wicked" actions come after

### **Reasoning:**

The evidence suggests her behavior is a response to loss and injustice, not proof of inherent evil. If my sibling was killed and everyone was cheering, I would be angry too. The film shows us her reactions but never shows us who she was before this happened.

### **Uncertainty:**

- I do not know anything about who she was before the movie starts
- I do not know why she and Glinda are enemies
- I do not know if she actually did wicked things before her sister's death
- I might change my mind if I learned she did terrible things before any of this happened

### **What makes this response strong:**

- The position is nuanced ("might not be")
- Evidence is specific and observable
- Reasoning explains the connection
- Uncertainty is genuine — the learner identifies what is actually missing
- It is set up for revision when new information arrives

## Section 2 Answer Key

### *Wicked*

#### Task 1: Testing Cycle

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##### **My Hypothesis from Section 1:**

Example: The Wicked Witch of the West might not be as wicked as the film wants us to believe. Her anger seemed understandable given what happened to her sister.

##### **New Information from Wicked:**

- She was rejected from birth for her skin color
- Her father blamed her for her mother's death (unfairly)
- She was raised by an Animal (Dulcibear), explaining her compassion for Animals
- The "wicked" label was created by Morrible as punishment for defying the Wizard
- She refused to participate in the oppression of Animals
- She gave up safety, acceptance, and belonging to stand for what was right

##### **Does this support or challenge my hypothesis?**

SUPPORTS and EXTENDS. My hypothesis was that she might not be wicked. Wicked provides extensive evidence that the "wicked" label was manufactured by those in power as punishment for her resistance. She's not just "not as bad as we thought" — she's actually the one who stood up against injustice.

##### **My Revised Conclusion:**

Elphaba is not wicked. She was labeled wicked by a corrupt regime because she refused to cooperate with their oppression of Animals. Her "wickedness" is actually moral courage. The label functions as political punishment, not accurate description.

##### **Remaining Uncertainty:**

Wicked is also a movie with its own agenda. It wants me to love Elphaba. I should notice that I'm being persuaded, even if I agree with the message. I also don't know what happens next — does Elphaba do things that could be called wicked later?

## Task 2: Story in My Head

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### **Elphaba's Story About Herself:**

"I am the reason my mother is dead and my sister is disabled. I destroy everything. I am a curse."

### **Evidence FOR this story:**

- Her mother did die in childbirth with Nessarose
- Nessarose was born with disabilities
- These events happened after Elphaba was born green

### **Evidence AGAINST this story:**

- Elphaba did not choose to be born green
- The green elixir was drunk before she even existed
- Her FATHER made the decision about the milkflowers
- The complications came from the milkflower treatment, not from Elphaba
- She was a baby — babies cannot be responsible for adult decisions

### **Where did this story come from?**

From her father's rejection. From being blamed from the moment she was born. When you are told you are wrong your whole life, you start to believe it. She internalized the blame others placed on her.

### **Is this story accurate?**

NO. Elphaba absorbed responsibility for decisions made by adults before she existed. Glinda's comment — "You didn't make your mother take those milkflowers" — is the first time anyone has challenged this false narrative.

## Task 2: Causal Reasoning – The Blame Pattern

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### The Lion's Blame:

- What he blames Elphaba for: Taking him from "the only home he ever knew"
- What actually happened: The Wizard's regime caged him, experimented on him, prevented him from learning to speak. Elphaba freed him.
- Who actually caused the harm: The Wizard's regime
- Why does he blame Elphaba? The "wicked" label does his thinking for him. Blaming her is easier than understanding what really happened.

### Boq's Blame:

- What he blames Elphaba for: Turning him into the Tin Man
- What actually happened: Nessarose enslaved him. Nessarose cast a spell that endangered his life. Elphaba saved him by transforming him.
- Who actually caused the harm: Nessarose
- Why does he blame Elphaba? She's the designated villain. The "wicked" label absorbs all blame.

### The Pattern:

Once someone is labeled "wicked," they become a bucket for all harm – even harm done by others, even harm they tried to prevent. The label does the thinking for people. Firsthand witnesses with direct evidence still blame the designated villain.

### What does this tell us?

Evidence is not enough when propaganda is strong enough. People see their suffering through the frame they were given, not through the facts they experienced.

## Task 7: Persuasive Techniques

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### Technique 1: Emotional Music Cueing

- "For Good" is designed to make you cry, not think
- Effect: Emotion bypasses critical evaluation of whether Glinda has earned this moment

### Technique 2: Selective Visibility

- Dorothy is never shown clearly – only her feet and shadow
- Effect: Her trauma (believing she killed someone) is erased from the story

### Technique 3: Rushed Resolution

- The Animals are welcomed back in one brief scene; Dr. Dillamond is freed and never seen again
- Effect: The political plot (Animal oppression) is resolved quickly so emotional plots can dominate

### Technique 4: Satisfying Ending

- Elphaba survives, love wins, Glinda grows
- Effect: We get what we want, which makes us less likely to question what the film skipped

### Overall Pattern:

The film uses these techniques to smooth over ethical friction. The ending feels emotionally clean even when moral resolution is incomplete. A critical thinker notices when their emotional satisfaction is being used to bypass their evaluation.

## Optional Extension: The Wizard's Challenge

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**Note:** I felt that an example of a response to this would be helpful. Therefore, I wrote how I would respond. The goal with this question is a thoughtful answer where your learner really thinks about the issues with conflating belief with facts. Your learner's answer will differ. Look for evidence of critical thinking, not exact matches.

### **Acknowledge what is true in his claim (when IS he right?)**

The Wizard is right that people often believe things because they WANT to believe them, not because evidence supports them. We saw this throughout all three films. The citizens of Oz wanted to believe in a powerful Wizard who could solve their problems, so they accepted Wizomania as "the absolute factual story" without questioning it. The crowds wanted someone to blame for their troubles, so, in *Wicked*, they accepted "Animals are the enemy" without asking for evidence. Elphaba wanted to believe the Wizard would help Animals, so she trusted him and read the spell without questioning what it would do. In all these cases, people treated their beliefs as facts because the beliefs felt true or served their needs.

### **Identify what is dangerous about his claim (what does it justify?)**

The danger in *Wicked* is that the Wizard uses this observation to justify manipulation. If "truth is just what people want to believe," then there is nothing wrong with manufacturing beliefs that serve your purposes. The Wizard used this logic to create propaganda (Wizomania), to scapegoat Animals ("give them a common enemy"), and to label Elphaba "wicked" for refusing to cooperate. His claim makes lying acceptable, even strategic. It erases the difference between evidence-based conclusions and manufactured stories. If nothing is really "true," then whoever controls the story controls reality. That is how authoritarian power works.

### **Apply at least three specific critical thinking tools to make your case.**

**Know vs. Believe (L2):** The Wizard's claim collapses the distinction between knowledge and belief. But the distinction matters. Knowledge is verified; belief is not. The citizens of Oz BELIEVED Elphaba was wicked, but they did not KNOW it. They had no evidence, only Morrible's announcement. Critical thinkers ask: "Where is my evidence? Can I verify this, or am I just accepting it?" The Wizard wants us to stop asking that question.

**Story in My Head (L6):** The Wizard is describing what happens when we mistake our mental narratives for reality. We all construct stories that feel true. Elphaba's story that she caused her mother's death, the crowd's story that the Witch was evil, even my own story about which characters are "good." The tool asks us to separate what we actually KNOW from the story we are TELLING ourselves. The Wizard is right that we do this, but the solution is not to give up on truth. It is to examine our stories critically and evaluate them for what is fact and what is fiction.

**Testing Cycle (L5):** The antidote to the Wizard's cynicism is the Testing Cycle. Yes, people form beliefs based on what they want to believe. But critical thinkers do not stop there. They OBSERVE, INFER, PREDICT, TEST, and REVISE. When new evidence contradicts their beliefs, they update. The three-film arc showed this in action: conclusions formed after *The Wizard of Oz* had to be tested against evidence from *Wicked* and revised. The Wizard wants people who never test, who just believe the current story. Critical thinkers keep testing.

**Did YOU escape the trap he described?**

Honestly, I am not sure I completely escaped. When I watched *Wicked*, I wanted to believe Elphaba was innocent. The film made me feel sympathetic toward her, and I may have accepted her perspective without enough evaluation of her actions and motives, just as I had accepted Oz's perspective before. I tried to notice when I was being manipulated, and I used the tools to test my conclusions, but I do not think anyone fully escapes this trap. The best I can do is recognize that I sometimes conflate belief with fact, and, when it matters, take the time to investigate whether evidence actually supports my position. The Wizard is right that belief is powerful. He is wrong that truth does not exist. The difference is whether you are willing to keep questioning.

**What to look for in your learner's response:**

Strong responses will:

- Acknowledge the Wizard has a point. People do believe what they want to believe.
- Identify why this is dangerous when used to justify manipulation.
- Apply specific tools by name and show how they address the problem.

- Show honest self-reflection about their own thinking across the three films.

Weaker responses may:

- Simply say the Wizard is wrong without engaging with what is true in his claim.
- Apply tools superficially without connecting them to the specific question.
- Claim to have escaped the trap without genuine reflection.