

THE LEARNER'S TOOLKIT
The Critical Thinker's Toolkit
Level 2

Critical Thinking Through Film

STUDENT GUIDE

CAPSTONE
The Wizard of Oz • Wicked • Wicked: For Good
Blair Lee, M.S.

THE LEARNER'S TOOLKIT SERIES

The Critical Thinker's Toolkit

Level 2 Capstone

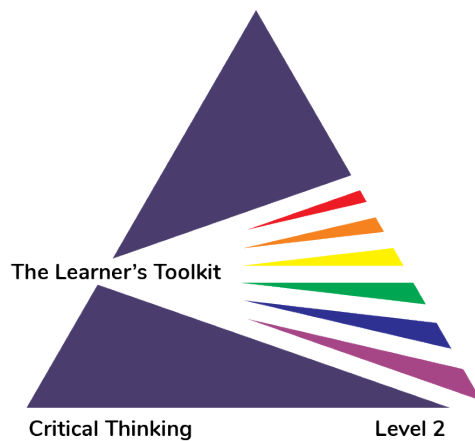
Critical Thinking Through Film

The Wizard of Oz • Wicked • Wicked: For Good



Student Workbook

SEA Publishing



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The Learner's Toolkit Series

The Learner's Toolkit is a series of evidence-based curricula built on Hochman Method principles of explicit, scaffolded instruction. Each toolkit provides systematic teaching that respects both child development and parent/teacher capabilities.

The Critical Thinker's Toolkit Level 2 teaches students to evaluate evidence, identify assumptions, trace causal reasoning, recognize bias, and revise conclusions when evidence warrants.

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Other Books by Blair Lee

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The Stargazer's Notebook



Welcome

This workbook is a critical thinking investigation across three films that tell the same story from different perspectives. You will question labels, test claims, separate what you observe from what you conclude, and build hypotheses you can revise as you gain new information.

The Arc

The Wizard of Oz (1939) presents a world where "good" and "wicked" seem obvious. You will analyze how the film creates those beliefs.

Wicked (2024) tells the story from the "Wicked Witch's" perspective. You will test your original conclusions against new information.

Wicked: For Good (2025) completes the story. You will synthesize everything and reflect on how your thinking changed.

How To Use This Workbook

This workbook can be used two ways, and both lead to the same place: becoming a stronger critical thinker.

If You Have Completed *The Critical Thinker's Toolkit Level 2 (Lessons 1–11)*

Welcome to Lesson 12, your capstone. You already know the tools: metacognition, Know vs. Believe, assumptions, Fact vs. Interpretation, the Testing Cycle, Story in My Head, causal reasoning, SIFT, evidence quality, reasoning chains, perspective, and bias. You have practiced each one. Now you will use them all together.

The three films will challenge you to think critically. *The Wizard of Oz* will ask you to form hypotheses. *Wicked* will challenge those hypotheses with new information. *Wicked: For Good* will push you to synthesize everything and reach your own conclusions.

If You Are New to *The Critical Thinker's Toolkit*

This workbook will teach you as you go.

Every task includes a complete worked example that shows you exactly how to use the thinking tool. You do not need any prior training. The examples are your teachers. By the time you finish all three films, you will have practiced ten different critical thinking tools through authentic application.

How Discussion and Workbook Tasks Work Together

If you are using the Teaching Guide alongside this workbook, here is how they connect:

Discussion helps you notice. The Teaching Guide includes questions to discuss after watching each film. These conversations help you see where critical thinking applies: moments where labels replace evidence, where assumptions hide, where the film is trying to manipulate you.

Noticing is not the same as doing. These tasks in this workbook ask you to use the tools to evaluate evidence, X-ray assumptions, build arguments, and test them.

The sequence matters. Try to discuss the film before jumping into workbook tasks. Discussion shows you what to look for; the workbook makes you do the looking.

How to Use the Worked Examples

Every task in this workbook starts with a worked example. The worked examples are there to help you succeed. How you use it depends on where you are starting from.

If you completed Lessons 1–11 and need a refresher:

1. Read the example to remind yourself how the tool works.
2. Notice the structure: What question does the tool ask? What steps does it follow?
3. If the skill feels fresh, move to the film-based task.
4. If you feel uncertain, work through the example more slowly before applying it.

If you are learning the skill for the first time:

1. Study the example carefully. This IS your instruction.
2. Work through each step and make sure you understand why it matters.
3. Use the example as a model: follow the same structure when you do the film-based task.
4. If you get stuck, return to the example and compare what you are doing to what it shows.

How to Work Through Each Section

Section 1 (*The Wizard of Oz*): Choose 2–3 tasks, then complete the Culminating Task.

Section 2 (*Wicked*): Choose 3–4 tasks, then complete the Revision Report.

Section 3 (*Wicked: For Good*): Choose 4–5 tasks, then complete the Final Synthesis.

Before You Begin

Watch the films in order. *The Wizard of Oz* first, then *Wicked*, then *Wicked: For Good*. The whole point is to see how your thinking changes when you get new information. Watching out of order breaks that.

Write down what you believe before each film. You will be asked to do this. Take it seriously. When you look back at what you wrote after watching, you will see your own thinking evolve.

There is no single "right answer." Your responses may differ from sample answers and still be excellent. What matters is that you use the tools and think carefully, not that you reach a specific conclusion.

Complete the culminating tasks. At the end of each section, there is a bigger task that pulls everything together.

Your Goal

By the end, you should be able to trace how your thinking evolved and explain why it changed. You should be able to use these tools on your own not just in this workbook, but in real life.

Note: Each thinking tool is explained with worked examples. You do not need prior materials to use this workbook.

Critical Thinking Tools

These are the tools you will use throughout this workbook. Each task includes a worked example.

Tool	The Question It Asks
Evidence Quality	How strong is this proof? Who said it? Can it be checked?
Assumptions	What is being taken for granted without proof?
Causal Reasoning	Does A actually cause B? What is the mechanism?
Fact vs. Interpretation	What did I observe vs. what did I decide it means?
Testing Cycle	Observe → Infer → Predict → Test → Revise
Story in My Head	What do I actually know vs. what story am I telling myself?
SIFT	Stop – Investigate – Find other sources – Trace the claim
Perspective Mapping	Position, Experience, Values, Needs – how do these shape beliefs?
Reasoning Chain	Position → Evidence → Reasoning → Uncertainty
Stress Test	Is my evidence actually evidence? What assumptions am I making?



Section 1

The Wizard of Oz

You probably already know the story of *The Wizard of Oz*. The Wicked Witch of the West is one of the most famous villains in American culture. But when you watch with critical thinking tools, you may notice things you never questioned before.

Before You Watch

What do you already believe about the Wicked Witch? Write your answer below.

While You Watch

Pay attention to what you actually SEE versus what you are TOLD. Notice who tells you things and what they might gain. Notice how the movie makes you FEEL and what techniques create those feelings.

After You Watch

Choose 2–3 of the following tasks. Then complete the Culminating Task to build your hypothesis.

Task 1: Evidence Quality

WORKED EXAMPLE

Claim: The neighbor's dog destroyed our garden.

Evidence: I saw the dog digging in the garden this morning.

Criterion	Evaluation	Rating
Source Reliability	I was present, firsthand observer.	High
Directness	I witnessed this directly.	High
Verifiability	Can check for paw prints, disturbed plants.	High
Consistency	Story is straightforward, no contradictions.	High
Completeness	Missing: exact time, extent of damage.	Medium

Overall: STRONG EVIDENCE — Firsthand observation, verifiable, reliable source.

Now Apply This

The Munchkins and Glinda celebrate the Wicked Witch of the East's death. They declare she was wicked.

Claim: The Wicked Witch of the East was wicked.

Using the Evidence Quality framework, evaluate the evidence you have that she was wicked.

Your Task:

Source Reliability: Who told you she was wicked? How trustworthy is that source?

Directness: Did you witness her wickedness firsthand, or did you hear about it?

Verifiability: Can her wickedness be checked or confirmed?

Consistency: Does the evidence match other things you observe (like how Munchkinland looks)?

Completeness: What is missing? Whose perspective do you not have?

Overall Rating: **Strong** **Moderate** **Weak**

Explain your reasoning:

Task 1: Testing Cycle

WORKED EXAMPLE

The Testing Cycle helps you refine your thinking: Observe → Infer → Predict → Test → Revise

Scenario: I kicked a soccer ball and it curved to the left.

OBSERVE: The ball curved left. I kicked it on the right side.

INFER: Kicking the side of the ball made it curve.

PREDICT: If my inference is correct, kicking the center should make it go straight.

TEST: I kicked the center. The ball went straight.

REVISE: My inference is supported. Kicking the side causes curve; kicking the center does not.

Now Apply This

After watching *Oz*, you formed a hypothesis about the Wicked Witch. Work through the Testing Cycle now that you have new observations from *Wicked*.

Your Task:

Step 1 – OBSERVE: What new facts did you learn about Elphaba in *Wicked*? List at least four specific observations.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Step 2 – COMPARE: Look at your original hypothesis from the Oz section. Does the new information SUPPORT it, CONTRADICT it, or COMPLICATE it?

Step 3 – REVISE: Based on the new evidence, how should your position change? Write a revised statement.

Step 4 – ACKNOWLEDGE: What do you still not know? What questions remain?

Task 2: Story in My Head

WORKED EXAMPLE

This tool separates "What I Know" from "Story in My Head."

Scenario: My neighbor usually says hi. Today, they looked at their phone and walked past without saying anything.

What I Know	Story in My Head
Neighbor walked past.	They must be mad at me.
They looked at their phone.	Maybe they hate my family now.
They did not say hi this time.	They are ignoring me on purpose.

The skill: Column 1 contains facts I observed. Column 2 contains stories my brain created—but they are not verified. They are imagination, not knowledge.

Now Apply This

Elphaba believes she caused her mother's death and her sister's disability.

Your Task:

Create a "What I Know" vs. "Story in My Head" chart for Elphaba's self-blame.

What Elphaba Actually KNOWS	The STORY IN HER HEAD

After completing the chart, answer:

1. Is Elphaba's story accurate?

2. Why might she believe this story even though it is not supported by evidence?

3. Who actually made the decisions that led to her mother's death and sister's disability?

Task 2: Causal Reasoning

WORKED EXAMPLE

Causal reasoning traces the actual chain of events to find where responsibility lies.

Claim: Justin Turner's lucky socks help the Dodgers win.

Tracing the chain: Turner wears same socks → Dodgers win games

Testing for mechanism: How would cotton fabric affect batting, pitching, or fielding? There is no mechanism. Socks cannot influence athletic performance.

What actually causes wins: Team playing well together, good matchups, effective training, healthy players.

Conclusion: Turner's brain connected two things that happened together (socks + wins), but one did not cause the other. Correlation, not causation.

Now Apply This

The Lion blames Elphaba for "taking him from the only home he ever knew." He uses this (and the monkeys' wings) to turn other Animals against her.

Your Task:

First, create a causal chain showing what ACTUALLY happened to the Lion.

Event 1	→	Event 2	→	Event 3	→	Event 4	→	Result

Then answer:

1. Where does the Lion place blame in this chain?

2. Where does the evidence suggest blame actually belongs?

3. What is the MECHANISM by which the Lion connects Elphaba to his suffering? Does it hold up?

4. Why might he blame Elphaba instead of the actual cause?

Task 5: Counter-Argument

WORKED EXAMPLE

Building a counter-argument uses the same Reasoning Chain structure, but you argue for the opposite position.

Here is why this matters:

When you can construct the strongest version of the opposing argument, you:

- Understand the real disagreement better
- Find weaknesses in your own position
- Avoid attacking a weak version of what the other side believes

The test: After building both arguments, ask: Which argument is stronger? What made me decide? Am I being honest, or am I favoring the position I started with?

Now Apply This

Your Task:

Now construct the strongest argument that Glinda DID NOT earn the "Good" label.

POSITION: Glinda does not deserve the "Good" label because...

EVIDENCE: List at least three specific actions, inactions, or choices.

1.

2.

3.

REASONING: Explain why this evidence demonstrates she has not earned the label.

UNCERTAINTY: What could challenge this position? Is there evidence of genuine goodness?

After completing both Tasks 4 and 5, answer:

Which argument is stronger? What made you decide?

Task 7: Persuasive Techniques

WORKED EXAMPLE

Persuasive techniques create feelings that may not be earned by evidence.

Analyzing a gaming accessories ad:

Technique	Example from Ad	What It Does
Bandwagon	Over 2 MILLION sold.	Makes you feel left out.
Testimonial	I ranked up twice in one week.	Uses one story as proof.
False Scarcity	Only 200 left, going FAST.	Creates fake urgency.

Key question: Is the emotion I feel earned by actual evidence, or manufactured by techniques?

Now Apply This

Your Task:

Choose ONE emotionally powerful scene from *Wicked: For Good*:

- The melting scene
- "For Good"
- Glinda's crowning / final scene

Identify at least three specific persuasion techniques the film uses in your chosen scene.

Examples of persuasion techniques:

Music swells (telling you when to feel emotional) • Lighting changes (making characters look good/bad/sympathetic) • Camera angles (who is elevated, who is small) • Pacing (slowing down for important moments) • What is shown vs. hidden • Color symbolism • Character reactions (modeling how you should feel)

Technique 1:

What happens (what do you see/hear)?

What feeling is it designed to create?

Is that feeling EARNED by the story's content, or MANUFACTURED by filmmaking?

Technique 2:

What happens (what do you see/hear)?

What feeling is it designed to create?

Is that feeling EARNED by the story's content, or MANUFACTURED by filmmaking?

Technique 3:

What happens (what do you see/hear)?

What feeling is it designed to create?

Is that feeling EARNED by the story's content, or MANUFACTURED by filmmaking?

Optional Extension

The Wizard's Challenge

For learners who want to go deeper

The Wizard said: The truth is not fact or reason—just what they want to believe in.

Your Task:

Write a response to the Wizard. Is he right?

Use evidence from all three films and from your own critical thinking work.

Your response should:

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

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

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

- Answer honestly: Did YOU escape the trap he described? Or did you just believe the last story you were told?

Final reflection: This question has no single right answer. What matters is whether you can defend your position with evidence and reasoning, and whether you remain open to revising it.