

CRITICAL THINKING, READING, AND WRITING

This book is a text about critical thinking and argumentation—a book about getting ideas, using sources, evaluating kinds of evidence, and organizing material. It also includes about fifty readings, with a strong emphasis on contemporary arguments. In a moment we will be a little more specific about what sorts of readings we include, but first we want to mention our chief assumptions about aims of a course that might use *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument*.

Probably most students and instructors would agree that, as critical readers, students should be able to

- Summarize accurately an argument they have read
- Locate the thesis (the claim) of an argument
- Locate the assumptions, stated and unstated
- Analyze and evaluate the strength of the evidence and the soundness of the reasoning offered in support of the thesis and
- Analyze, evaluate, and account for discrepancies among various readings on topic (for example, explain why certain facts are used, why others are ignored, why probable consequences of a proposed action are examined or ignored, or why two sources might interpret the same facts differently).

