

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is the ongoing search for **valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions.**

Suggestions for Promoting Critical Thinking for Ages 6-8

TIP:

Nate the Great understands that to be a detective, everything counts, and he has to look for clues everywhere. For example, he notices that Annie likes yellow.

Ask your child:

- “What else does Nate the Great notice?”

SKILL:

In order to **think critically**, children need to be **observant**.

TIP:

Ask your child:

- “What theories does Nate the Great develop to find the missing painting?”

SKILL:

Critical Thinking centers on developing **theories or hypotheses—proposed explanations based on evidence that can be tested.**

TIP:

Ask your child how Nate the Great tests his theories or hypotheses. Include what questions he asks (such as if there are any trapdoors or secret passages in Annie’s house) and how he conducts experiments to test his theories (such as digging for the picture in Annie’s yard).

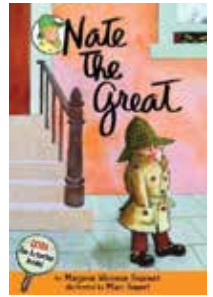
SKILL:

Critical Thinking involves testing theories by **asking questions and conducting experiments.**

Nate the Great

By Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

Nate the Great is on the case! With dry humor, this classic early chapter book introduces readers to a boy detective tracking clues, interviewing suspects and finding whatever’s missing. It’s a delightful introduction to noir for growing readers.



High-quality books and educational resources from First Book supporting research-based Life Skills from *Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky



Find more books and materials on the First Book Marketplace, a resource available exclusively to educators and programs serving children in need. www.fbmarketplace.org.

You will notice that these tips promote two child development principles: **Serve and Return** and **Executive Function** skills.

Serve and Return, like a game of ball, involves a back and forth conversation between you and your child where you listen, then build on and extend what your child says or does to promote learning.

Executive Function skills are skills you use to manage your attention, your feelings, your thoughts and your behavior to reach your goals.

They include being able to pay attention, remember information, think flexibly and exercise self control.

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Suggestions for Promoting Critical Thinking for Ages 6-8

TIP:

Ask your child:

- “What problems did Nate the Great encounter as he tried to solve the mystery? How did he solve these problems?””

SKILL:

Problem solving is key to Critical Thinking, which calls on **Executive Function** skills.

TIP:

Nate the Great finally solves the mystery by remembering what happens when you mix colors.

Ask your child if they have ever solved a mystery by remembering valid and accurate information.

SKILL:

Critical Thinking includes **being able to remember previous experiences and information and apply this knowledge to the present.**

At the end of the book, there are a number of suggested activities. Your child might enjoy some of these. Remember to point out the times he or she is using Critical Thinking skills in these activities or in other things your child does.

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