

How Total Motivation Promotes **Critical Thinking**



Integrating meaningful learning experiences that promote critical thinking is essential in cultivating 21st-century learners. Total Motivation offers multiple and varied opportunities that help students become critical thinkers. Students need to think critically in order to become life-long learners and self-advocates.

Thinking-Centered Learning Environment

- Create a critical thinking environment (choice, collaboration, questioning, problem solving) using print, online, or a combination of Total Motivation formats.
- Use varied and flexible settings (e.g., whole group, small group, stations) to engage students in teacher edition or student edition unit components.

Opportunities to Offer Choice

- Allow students some choice in how to complete assignments choosing either print, online, or a combination of formats.
- Invite students to choose between working individually or with a partner and to make limited choices relating to assignments.

Opportunities to Promote Collaboration

- Project student edition pages onto whiteboards and guide students (entire class, small group) to engage in academic conversations when discussing the displayed page (e.g., actively listen, add onto ideas, and cite evidence for their thinking; analyze and evaluate evidence; make judgments based on viewpoints of others, interpret information and draw conclusions).
- Use 'partner talks' about real-world application (e.g., Teacher Edition Extended Thinking) to strengthen collaboration, develop reasoning, understand multiple perspectives, and deepen understanding of content.
- Form small groups and discuss what students learned from print and online assignments. Lead students to synthesize new learning, reflect on experiences, and make connections.

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Opportunities to Use Thoughtful Questions

- Interact with students while they work in print student editions or online activities to promote group and partner collaborative conversations.
- Pose open-ended questions from the student edition and follow up with questions that model how to think and move the conversation (e.g., *Do you agree/disagree? Why?; Do you connect to what _ said? How?; What can you add?; Do you see it differently? Explain*).
- Probe for deeper meaning discussing responses to the Critical Thinking component in the student edition: *What do you think? Why do you say that? How does _ relate to our discussion? What evidence supports your thinking? What is another example? What is an alternative? Why is _ best?*

Opportunities to Invite Problem Solving

- Invite students to work in groups, with partners, or independently and seek reasonable solutions to open-response student edition questions/tasks.
- Ask students to propose a justifiable plan for engaging in focused practice on select student edition unit components, utilizing their format preference (print, online, a combination) and their group choice (e.g., partner, independent).
- Have students reflect on and self-assess strength/weakness patterns about their thinking. Hold data talks using the Standards Mastery Report to observe mastery of items. Use the Teacher Edition Answer Key to share the thinking level coded to each item.

For additional support, including the user guide and how-to tutorials, visit [MentoringMindsOnline.com](https://mentoringminds.com) and click **Resources** in the upper-right corner.

