# INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six topics, they are the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of terms.

## The Background of the Study

Critical thinking is frequently related to analytical and reflective thinking to resolve a case or problem and is essential for students to encounter life's challenges not only at school but also in social life. This is a type of cognitive thinking that requires them to think critically to conclude the situation. Hatcher and Spencer declared that critical thinking is a valuable skill since it is required in the workplace, it can assist in dealing with mental and spiritual issues, and it can be used to analyze people, policies, and organizations, to prevent social problems (Dewi, 2016).

Critical thinking is a skill that every student should have, especially in higher education, where students are expected to think critically in every learning activity at school. It will make the learners getting high proficiency in their lesson easier. Reichenbach (2001), as cited in Rohayati (2017), declared that critical thinking encourages students to think at a more advanced level. It can be assumed that critical thinking has an important role in education. As mentioned by Epcacan (2019), the ability to think critically plays a crucial part in the development of language and the internalization of acquired skills. Otherwise, teachers should pay attention to this area to make it easier for students to understand a lesson, and successful learning is created. Therefore, it can be concluded that critical thinking is essential in higher-level education.

Writing an argumentative text is one activity that encourages students to employ critical thinking. According to Kurfiss (1988), one of the three perspectives on critical thinking and its development in college is argument skills. Argumentative text is the type of text that which the writer must involve critical thinking. This is in line with another belief in Dewi (2021) that when writing an essay, students should think critically since they must extend and develop their ideas, which requires them to think critically and creatively. According to Kuek (2010, in Suhartoyo, 2017), critical thinking abilities are presented in writing an argumentative text since the writer analyzes, evaluates, and contradicts arguments before presenting a logical perspective or fact to persuade the readers. Additionally, Thompson argued that an argumentative essay is a presentation of reasoning by students to defend their stance. It is more than just a declaration of view; it is an attempt to strengthen their perspective with reasons (Ramadhan, 2019).

This text contains not only the writer's arguments but also other elements to strengthen the writer’s arguments. Andrews (1995) defined an argumentative text as a process of argumentation, a connected series of statements intended to establish a position and imply a response to another (or more than one) position (Mohammed & EIsafi, 2015). Justification of beliefs is a component of critical thinking, and argumentation is the vehicle through which justification is provided. An argument, In the context of critical thinking, is a "train of reasoning" that connects claims with supporting evidence to develop a stance (Kurfiss, 1988). Because of the necessity of constructing and analyzing arguments, critical thinking is required in this activity.

Argumentative writing portrays arguments, facts, evidence, reasons, description, or explanation that support the side being discussed, a certain stance the writer shares (Chaffee, 2002, as cited in Samanhudi, 2018). For those reasons, critical thinking is needed in writing an argumentative text.

On the other hand, many teachers tend to overlook students' critical thinking, which has an impact on learning, because they are only concerned with the curriculum's output. As mentioned by Hasaniyah (2017) written work is frequently viewed by teachers as an opportunity to display how much knowledge they have gathered about a particular subject rather than as an opportunity to demonstrate their critical thinking. She went on to argue that it makes it difficult for students to judge how much evidence critical thinking will provide with internal or external factors that students have in their written work. Furthermore, teachers should not equalize students' abilities, particularly their critical thinking skills because each student has a different critical thinking skill. If they do so, some students with poor critical thinking skills will have a harder time learning.

Teachers ended up to be lacking or even completely having no idea of students’ critical thinking, even though this needs to be known. Analyzing students' critical thinking is a step to understanding students' critical thinking abilities which later on, the teacher knows which aspects need to be improved and also determines the steps that must be chosen (Rachmawati, 2015). According to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), critical thinking abilities are one of the seven competencies that students must develop during their postsecondary education (Fadhlullah & Ahmad, 2017). By knowing students’ critical thinking skills, teachers can find students’ weaknesses in critical thinking. Finally, the teacher should be mindful of the students' critical thinking to design appropriate learning techniques, which have an impact on their critical thinking development.

Other researchers have undertaken several previous studies on the subject. Samanhudi (2018) researched students’ critical thinking in the argumentative text using A Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective**.** He conducted this study since there is rarely research on critical thinking in Indonesia, despite the need to investigate students' initial critical thinking in the context of writing because many students difficult to demonstrate critical thinking elements such as arguments, reasons, and evidence in their essays.From the study, he find out that participants were able to demonstrate some of the critical thinking skills stressed in this study, such as arguments, reasons, facts, and views, in response to a societal issue and found out that the students need more guidance so that they have a better command of some critical thinking components to develop their critical thinking.

Another study is from Mohammed & EIsafi (2015) conducted research about “to what extent can argumentative essay writing help develop learners’ critical thinking”. The findings of this study revealed that writing an argumentative essay can significantly improve EFL critical thinking skills.

While various studies have revealed the aspects that exist in students' critical thinking while writing argumentative texts, and the relationship between writing activity and critical thinking skills, this study used the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric to categorize students' critical thinking skills by integrating their argumentative texts to the criteria contained in the rubric. It needs to be done because by knowing this, teachers and students themselves can easily determine the appropriate learning method. This research was inspired by the research conducted by Efendi (2018) titled Analysis of Student’s Critical Thinking in Writing Argumentative Essays in one of the private universities in West Jawa, Indonesia, in using the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric to determine the critical thinking level in students’ argumentative essay.

## The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the critical thinking category concerning argumentative essays of fourth-semester students of one university in Garut Academic Year 2021/ 2022 using the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric.

## The Research Question

Based on the research background above, this research will be formulated based on research questions as follows.

What is the category of student's critical thinking that is presented in their argumentative text?

## The Objective of the Study

Concerning the research question above, the objective of this research is to find out the category of students' critical thinking that appears in their argumentative text.

## The Significance of the Study

### a. For Students

The results of this study will provide students, particularly students in the fourth semester in one University in Garut with reflection and information in terms of their critical thinking skills in writing their texts.

### b. For Teachers

This study is expected to raise teachers' awareness so that they can improve the quality of teaching writing argumentative text and allow students to appropriately explore their critical thinking skills.

## The Definition of Terms

### a. Critical Thinking

Ramezani et al. (2016) stated that from a scholar’s point of view, critical thinking is a subset of three types of thinking: reasoning, decision making, and judgment, as well as problem-solving.

In this case, critical thinking is a mental process that involves analyzing and evaluating evidence and developing reasoned arguments based on facts and credible data.

### b. Argumentative Text

Argumentative text is a genre of writing that requires the students to investigate a topic; generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic concisely (Sabu & Vernandes, 2019). It is the form of text in which students are free to express their thoughts and opinions as long as they have evidence to support them. Students also have to analyze the topic from both sides (pros and cons).