



# Cognitive Tool 17

## PCQ and THE EXTENDED PCQ (Pros, Cons, Questions)

### Background

This is a simple three and four column critical thinking tool which encourages learners to create a more substantial response to analytical questions, proposals, idea or suggestions. Pros and Cons have been with us since early times but the addition of the Questions column provides for far more insightful responses and often identifies the abler students in the class.

### Process

**PCQ** is a basic tool for the critical thinker, attempting to analyse any situation before deciding whether or not to support it. Draw up a simple table to help students make sense of their deliberations.



### Sample

*PCQ - General*

Topic: **Everyone Should Learn to Cook (NAPLAN)**

1	😊 Pros	2	☹ Cons	3	🤔 Questions
↓		↓		↓	

**Step 1: P = Pros 1**  
Enter all the pros, advantages, positives, good points here.

**Step 2: C = Cons 2**  
Enter all the Cons, disadvantages, negatives, weak points, problems, difficulties, etc. here.

**Step 3: Q = Questions 3**  
Enter all the questions, "What if...?", "I wonder...?", "It would be interesting to know whether...", possibilities, unusual questions, insights here.

### The Extended PCQ

This takes the analysis further and deeper by using **Perspectives**, criteria, special points of interest and is done after the general **PCQ**. Add a fourth column header: Perspectives or Points of View.

### Sample

*PCQ - Extension*

Topic: **Everyone Should Learn to Cook (NAPLAN)**

Para	4 Perspectives	5 😊 Pros	5 ☹ Cons	5 🤔 Questions	Extent Barometer
1	Students				7
2	Parents				
3	Health				
4	Finance				
5	Relationships				
6	School	6	6	6	7

100	Very High
75	Fairly High
50	Medium
25	Low
0	None at all

Overall Extent Barometer

**Step 4: Perspectives 4**  
The Teacher offers several perspectives to be entered below each other. Allow students the opportunity to include some of their own perspectives.

**Step 5: Other entries 5**  
In each cell, enter 2 more Pros, Cons or Questions, but do not repeat what has been entered in the **PCQ Analysis** above.

**Step 6: Consolidate 6**  
Move as many of the ideas as possible from the general **PCQ** to one of the Perspectives. Any remaining material could be placed in a new Perspective.

**Step 7: Extent Barometer 7**  
An extra column can be added for an **Extent Barometer** (p.154) enabling assessment, judgement or evaluation of each entry or perspective.

Encourage students to transfer comments from the general section to the various Perspectives. In this way each Perspective becomes a paragraph, allowing students to create an analytical report. An option is to dispense with the General three column **PCQ** structure and get straight into the **Extended PCQ** with the **Extent Barometer** column on the right. If students are using this tool to Analyse their work in progress, change 'Questions' to 'Improvements' (PCI).

### Observation



Bring this thinking tool to life! Watch the video and access the writable template here!

[www.teacherpd.com.au/qr/pcq](http://www.teacherpd.com.au/qr/pcq)



NOVEMBER

**P C Q** (Pros, Cons, Questions)**Examples****Senior Primary****Plan to Persuade!**

(A: English, Yr.4-6: ACELY1714, NZ: English, Lvl 3-4, Listening, Reading &amp; Viewing)

Choose a debatable topic and use the **PCQ** for students to brainstorm all their ideas. Brainstorming ALL the ideas about a topic gives students information on what side they want to take. It also gives them the arguments from the other side that they might like to counter. Students can use the Questions, as rhetorical questions in their work.

**Topic: We should have a longer summer break (like the 10 weeks in the USA)**

😊 Pros	☹ Cons	🤔 Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research shows creativity needs 'free time' to be enhanced.</li> <li>• Great summer camps – swimming, canoeing, hiking...</li> <li>• Older children can get jobs - great for learning independence and reliability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More crime e.g. graffiti - from idle and bored kids.</li> <li>• Teachers get a poor reputation because they are 'always on holiday'.</li> <li>• Expensive to pay for summer camps and child care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents work – so how are they going to look after the children?</li> <li>• Will it be cheaper to take holidays away as it is not a short 6 week expensive peak season?</li> </ul>

Presentation options:

- Write a persuasive article.
- Set up a debate against a team taking the opposite side.
- Find one person with the opposite view and try to persuade them to your side.
- Create a PowerPoint to persuade the whole class.

**Middle Primary****Great Journeys (A: History, Yr.4: ACHHL078, NZ: History, Lvl 4, Social Studies)**

Students investigate one of the great journeys by a world navigator prior to 18<sup>th</sup> Century, such as Ferdinand Magellan's journey to South America. If you were offered a position as an officer on the ship – would you go?

😊 Pros	☹ Cons	🤔 Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure – seeing new lands and people</li> <li>• Rewards – possible riches from the trip</li> <li>• For King and Country – navigation maps and knowledge for future voyages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor conditions on the ships and the possibility of disease</li> <li>• Tension between the captain and crew – possibility of mutinies.</li> <li>• Danger with local peoples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the chances of survival?</li> <li>• How long will it take?</li> </ul>

Perspectives:

- Safety
- Science
- Trade
- Religion

