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Chapter 1 Critical Thinking/Essay Questions

1. Dr. Soso completes a research project and determines that children who watch less television earn higher grades in math. Dr. Soso's study is published in major newspapers across the country and excited parents turn off their televisions in anticipation of their children's grades rising. However, after ten weeks with no television, their children's math grades fail to improve. The parents are outraged. "How could this be?" they ask. "Did we really give up 10 weeks of cartoons for no reason?"

As Dr. Soso's assistant, you are asked to compose a letter to these parents explaining to them why their children's math grades failed to rise. Please include in your explanation the differences between the experimental and correlational method. Also, what responsibility might the parents have in this situation for their children's math grades?

2. As a newly minted chapter one reader, you are asked to design an experiment to determine the impact of caffeine upon performance in introductory psychology courses. Utilizing the scientific method, please describe how you would go about determining the impact of caffeine. What are the factors that you must consider? Please include a discussion of independent and dependent variables, control, sampling and blinds/double blinds.

3. Every year, a large amount of money is spent on products derived via pseudoscience. Your task for this question is to find an example of a book or a product that could be described as pseudoscience (you may even find an example on those late night infomercials). After you find your example, discuss how people might be able to avoid being taken advantage of by utilizing the features of critical thinking that are listed in your text. Please demonstrate how at least 4 out of the 8 features of critical thinking could cast doubt upon the item you chose to analyze.

4. Historically, higher education has not been very inviting for women. What might have been the cause of this change? And why are we now seeing the numbers of women begin to exceed that of men in colleges across America?

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