

Textual Interpretation

**PHL 320
Critical Thinking
Distance Delivery**

A Mysterious Sign

PRIVATE MEMBERS ONLY

- **Faculty Club**
- **What does it mean?**

Critical Thinking

Evidence for Reading of a Text

- e₁. The “text” is on a sign.**
- e₂. The sign is on a door.**
- e₃. The door is to the Johns Hopkins University Club.**
- e₄. The “text” reads “PRIVATE MEMBERS ONLY.”**

Critical Thinking

Possible Explanations

- t₀. Only those persons who belong to this club may enter it.**
- t₁. Only those who are secretly and not publicly members of this club may enter it.**
- t₂. Only the genitalia of members may enter.**
- t₃. You may bring in your own genitalia.**
- t₄. Only genitalia may enter.**
- t₅. The sign was intentionally designed with double meaning by witty intellectuals.**

Critical Thinking

Evidence for Reading of a Text

- e₁. The “text” is on a sign.**
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Critical Thinking

Rank Order

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- t₅. The sign was intentionally designed with double meaning by witty intellectuals.**
- t₁. Only those who are secretly and not publicly members of this club may enter it.**
- t₄. Only genitalia may enter.**
- t₂. Only the genitalia of members may enter.**
- t₃. You may bring in your own genitalia.**

Critical Thinking

Evaluation of the Evidence for an Interpretation

Since the common sense interpretation of the text provides the best explanation of the text and other relevant data, the evidence in support of the interpretation is strong.

Critical Thinking

The Constitution

- **History**
- **Written document**
- **Interpretive theories**
 - **Plain meaning**
 - **Originalism**
 - **Concrete intentions**
 - **Abstract intentions**
 - **Non-originalism**
- **Constitutional precedent**

Critical Thinking

The Supreme Court

- **Nine Justices**
- **Chief Justice**
- **Majority rules**
- **Majority opinion (opinion of the Court)**
- **Concurring opinions**
- **Dissenting opinions**

Critical Thinking