Critical Writing – Useful Phrases

Relating to theories/arguments etc:

There are a number of strengths/weaknesses etc with this theory/argument. Firstly ---. Secondly --. More/most importantly/significantly ---.

A (particularly) important strength of this is ---
One/a further (major/key) criticism of Smith’s work is that ---
A (serious) weakness/problem with this
theory/argument/viewpoint/explanation/proposal/interpretation is that ---
However, this fails to/does not appear to take account of ---
What Smith fails to do is ---
Smith fails to fully acknowledge the importance of/need for --- etc
Smith offers no explanation for/omits to explain/mention ---
This could be challenged on the basis that ---
This relies too heavily on/places too much emphasis on ---
A counter argument might be that ---
It might be argued, however, that ---
An alternative explanation might be that ---
One question that might need to be asked is ---
It is questionable whether ---
There is an inconsistency in this argument: ---
An apparent inconsistency/omission is that ---
Smith contradicts himself in this when he states that ---
This argument/theory etc does not/fails to stand up to scrutiny when considering ---
This is/would not be appropriate in situations/cases where ---
There are/could be difficulties/limitations with applying this in practice, however.
This could present difficulties in practice. For example ---
The practical implications of this need to be carefully considered.
Implementation of this has not been without/has presented (considerable/numerous/some) difficulties.

**Relating to practices/methods/models:**

This has/had the benefit/positive effect/advantage of ---

A positive outcome of this was ---

This appears to have been successful largely because –

This method/approach is particularly/mainly appropriate/useful in cases/circumstances where ---

One/another problem/disadvantage/drawback with this method/approach is/was that ---

This model/method/approach does/did not address/take account of ---

Perhaps the most serious disadvantage/limitation of this method is ---

There are a number of limitations when following this approach/using this method/model.

This method/model has a number of limitations/disadvantages

This method/approach does not lend itself to cases/situations where ---

**Introducing other people’s criticisms:**

This has been criticised/challenged by –

Critics (Smith, 2008; Jones, 2009) have argued that ---

Many/some have challenged this on the grounds that ---

**Constructive suggestions:**

A better/more systematic study would ---

It would be/would have been better/more beneficial/appropriate/useful/effective to ---

A better/more helpful etc approach/method etc would be/have been to---

The X approach/model would be/have been more appropriate/beneficial in this case/these circumstances.

This situation/these circumstances would lend itself/themselves better to the X model/approach.

Further explanation/clarification/research is required/recommended.