

## **Reflective Essay**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

A reflective essay examines what you learned from a specific text, event, or experience.

Its purpose is to encourage critical thinking and self-awareness by exploring how the experience affected you and what you gained from it.

Remember that reflective essays aim to deepen your understanding of a specific assignment or experience, so your thoughts, feelings, and insights are crucial.

### **What a Reflective Essay Is Not**

A simple summary of events

A straightforward narrative of what happened

An opinion about whether something was good or bad

Instead, it focuses on insight and growth.

### **Before You Write**

Think carefully about your personal experience and its impact on you.

### **Ask Yourself**

What specific text, event, or experience am I reflecting on?

How did I feel during the experience?

What challenges or difficulties did I face?

What did I learn?

How has this experience influenced my future actions or decisions?

What new insights have I gained about myself?

### **Style and Tone**

Use first person pronouns.

Focus on personal experiences and insights rather than only stating facts.

### **Describe**

Provide a clear, detailed account of the experience.

What was the text, event, or experience?

What happened?

When and where did it occur?

Who was involved?

What was my role?

### **Interpret**

Analyze the meaning and significance of the experience.

Did it meet my expectations? Why or why not?

What questions did it raise?

What aspects were most meaningful or challenging?

### **Evaluation**

Assess the positive and negative aspects of the experience.

What did I learn?

What went well, and what didn't?

How did this experience change my understanding or perspective?

### **Plan**

Explain how you will apply what you learned moving forward.

How will this experience influence my future actions?

What goals do I have as a result?

What steps will I take to improve or grow?

### **Conclusion**

Summarize the key insights from your reflection and reinforce what the experience taught you about yourself.

**Describe:** Provide a clear, detailed account of the experience.

**Interpret:** Analyze the meaning and significance of the experience.

**Evaluation:** Assess the positive and negative aspects of the experience.

**Plan:** Explain how you will apply what you learned moving forward.

**Conclusion:** Summarize the key insights from your reflection.

## References

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