



Writing Centre

Reflection Essays

A reflection paper is designed as a way for you to express your expectations, understanding, and appreciation of an experience or topic and to explain how that experience or topic has impacted the way you think and act. Usually a reflection paper is assigned as a response to (1) something you did or experienced or (2) something you listened to, viewed, or read. Below is a sample method to help you develop useful content for your reflection paper:

Step 1: Establish your goals or aims for your experience or reading.

Goals for an experience, practicum, volunteer opportunity, or workshop	Aims for a reading, documentary, or lecture
Examples that focus on understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe/see/watch... • Learn/understand how to... • Shadow/follow/meet... • Consider how the experience relates to the material I am learning in class. 	Examples that focus on understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the subject matter. • Understand how the reading adds to other perspectives on the topic, as well as what I am learning in class. • Identify the key points.
Examples that focus on participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify my experience in/with... • Participate in... • Experience/practice... • Complete/present/contribute... • Prepare for... 	Examples that focus on discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form points of agreement and disagreement with the scholar. • Formulate my own perspectives on the topic. • Consider ways the scholar could have taken the topic further. • Consider new questions about the topic that have arisen for me. • Discuss strengths/weaknesses in the scholar's argument.

Step 2: Evaluate how your goals and aims were met and any challenges you had. You should also reflect on new thoughts that have arisen. Some points for consideration might include the following:

- Has my way of thinking changed as a result of...?
- Am I going to start acting any different?
- Have I been challenged academically, socially, or philosophically?
- Have my beliefs or perceptions changed?

Step 3: Write your reflection paper. Use your evaluation above to generate ideas for your paper. As with any paper, make sure you identify a theme or thesis that will tie the points of your reflection together. You can choose to discuss each of your goals one-by-one (provided the list is not too long) or to reflect on your experience in narrative fashion. You should also consider that the instructor might have assigned a specific outline or template for you to follow.