



Reflective Writing

Reflective writing is a process where you think about something you've read, watched or experienced and reflect on its meaning and how it will influence you in the future. You should follow any guidelines given by your instructor; this handout contains a general approach to understanding and writing a reflection paper. Reflective writing comes in many forms, such as a diary, a journal, a portfolio, a research log, or a reflective essay.

There are usually **three basic parts** to any piece of reflective writing. The first is an introduction to the general topic/situation and your particular concern or issue. The second part is an analysis of the event or situation, while the third section requires you to think and write about its meaning within your development as a student or professional. Many pieces of reflective writing include a statement about what you will do or how you will behave in the future based on what you learned. It's okay to use "I/we" in reflective writing. See the examples below.

Part 1: a short description

A. What happened?	
B. What have you been asked to look at?	

Example: *We had a guest speaker in class who explained the Canadian system of putting expiry dates on food.*

Part 2: your interpretation

A. What is interesting or important about the situation you described?	
B. Can it be compared or contrasted to some other experience?	
C. Is there any way to explain it? Is there a theory you can refer to?	

Example: *It was interesting to discover that the dates are guidelines and the speaker said that we can often use food that has passed its expiry date. She said that we can smell and look at the food as a reasonable guide to freshness. I remembered that last week I threw out a piece of cheese that looked fine but was past its expiry date.*

Part 3: the outcome/result

A. What did you learn?	
B. How will it affect your behaviour in the future?	

Example: *I learned that the expiry date system is not a rule but a guideline and that most food is still okay after the expiry date has passed. In the future, I will take more time to decide if something needs to be thrown out, instead of automatically discarding items barely past the expiry date.*

