

Writing Reflections

In many disciplines, you'll often be tasked with some form of reflective writing that pushes you to analyze your experiences and urges you to apply them to the future. This is usually a way that your instructor or supervisor wants you to talk about what you have learned about the *process*, not just the material. Here, we'll discover how to tackle such writings.

Reflective Writing covers three stages of thought:

- What happened?
- Why did that happen? / Why is that important?
- What's next?

You'll often see reflections after big papers or intensive projects. Your goal is to reflect on the assignment and your work by asking yourself these questions and writing about them. Here is a brief overview of the reflection process:

Part I, Description:

- Describe your project, the questions you covered, and the things you did.
- Be brief! A lengthy description will detract from the rest of the reflection.

Part II, Analysis:

- Explain why this project was an important undertaking for you.
- Report on what you learned throughout the process.
- Connect your work to other assignments, readings, or work, if possible.

Part III, Application:

- Discuss how this experience has changed you. Show your growth.
- If you plan to undertake this project again or do a similar project, explain what you'd do differently and why.
- Explore how this knowledge will impact any related future work.

A Few Things to Remember:

- Unless otherwise instructed, write in the first person. This is your story and your experiences.
- Always be specific in your reflective writings. Try to avoid clichés or empty phrases. Ask yourself: could someone else's reflection have the exact same sentence or sentences in it? If so, try to make your language more specific to your own project.
- If you find yourself struggling, ask yourself if you've covered the basic components of reflective writing (description, analysis, application). If you haven't done these three things, your reflection is not yet complete.