

## Reflections

Reflective writing is useful for making connections, clarifying concepts, examining successes and failures, and becoming more self-aware (48). Some reflections may address specific topics, while others address specific (and often personal) experiences. You may find reflections more challenging than other types of writing because it involves a more introspective approach to writing and some degree of self-awareness (49).

Reflective writing often involves two main components (48,49):

1. A personal response, emotion, or reaction to new or previous experiences or information.
2. Integration or “processing” the response and relating it to theory or practice.

Reflections are not just a regurgitation of course material or the simple retelling of a story. They involve profound integration of these experiences or opinions with new course theories and perspectives (48). While each instructor has different requirements for such writing assignments, below are some general guidelines on reflecting reflections.

### Structure

Here is the general structure your reflection should assume (50):

1. **Description.** Briefly describe the experiences or reactions to events.
2. **Application and Interpretation.** Examine how the situation or reaction relates to course material, theories, or concepts.
3. **Conclusion.** Describe what has been learned from the reflection and how this knowledge can be applied moving forward.

### Best practices:

- While reflections are inherently personal, you should still ensure that the writing maintains a professional tone. It is easy to slip into a casual tone when describing personal feelings or experiences, but this is still an academic document.
- Some instructors prefer that the assignment is written entirely in third-person, so it is best to check in with the instructor or the assignment instructions.
- Use the **past tense** to describe particular experiences or moments, and use the **present tense** to describe new information/theories (49). For example, one might say, “I *worked* as a cashier for many years...” to describe their previous experiences, but would alternatively say “The author *explores* this theory by...” in order to describe integrated course content.
- Be sure to focus on **interpretations** and **conclusions**. While it is important to discuss a specific story or reaction, the main purpose of a reflection is to arrive at a conclusion after interpreting personal experiences through course concepts.

### *Example*

Below is an example that reflects on foundational knowledge gained in the course and discusses what was learned, how it was learned, examples of learning and the significance of learning.

I came into this course with minimal knowledge of anything related to finances. Therefore, every term, fact, formula or concept I have been taught in this course has been a gain in foundational knowledge for me. What was most helpful in learning foundational knowledge was the practice and examples. I can read conceptually about a term or concept or formula, but unless I can see an example of it or practice an application of it, then I won't learn it. Therefore, all the practice examples (including assignments) were very helpful in understanding the material presented. Taking the in-class quizzes and the midterm showed me that I was remembering and understanding the concepts we were learning in class. Doing well on the midterm, and feeling confident throughout taking it, built confidence that I could use my foundational knowledge. The significance of this learning, for me, is to end with a fuller understanding of finances coming from a base knowledge of nothing and a perspective of not really being interested in finances. However, after coming to a fuller understanding, I see the value and importance of this learning and knowledge.

For more information on writing reflections, visit:

- [UNSW Reflective Writing](#)
- [University of Reading Reflective Writing](#)