



Writing a Reflection Paper

- A reflection paper is an assignment where you analyze what you have read or experienced and incorporate your ideas or opinions on the subject. The purpose is to learn from a text or experience and make connections between it and your insights.
- Although you may be asked to include reflection in parts of other writing assignments, the purpose of this resource is to provide a guideline for writing a reflection paper.

Basics of Writing a Reflection

- Reflections are typically short and informal works, but refer to the rubric for length requirements
- Maintain academic language by using formal diction, avoiding contractions, and avoiding slang/abbreviations
- It may be beneficial to include anecdotes, a short story about a real person/incident, to make your reflection personal, relatable, and to incorporate your ideas

Reflective Questions to Get you Started

- What are my main ideas?
- What do I think about the topic? Do I agree? Disagree? Why?
- How do I relate to this topic?
- What did I learn from this experience?
- Where and how will I implement what I have learned?

Introduction

1. First, identify and briefly explain the text or experience.
2. The next step would be to indicate your reaction to the text or experience.
3. Finally, you will end with a thesis statement. Your purpose for writing the reflection should be clear to your readers. For more information on how to create a strong thesis statement, please see our Lewis OWL [resource](#).

Body Paragraphs

1. Describe the main idea of the paragraph with a topic sentence
2. **Use details** to support the main idea and give context
3. Interpret and discuss your views regarding the topic
4. Evaluate the reactions you had to the content and discuss why you think you felt that way

Conclusion

1. Discuss your overall reflection. What did you learn? What lesson/s did you gain?
2. Finally, plan for the future. How will you apply what you've learned? How will it be useful to you, for example, in your personal life or your career?



Writing a Reflection Paper

Format

Typically, writers will use MLA format for reflection papers. However, professors will let you know if they have a specific format they would like you to use. When in doubt, request clarification from your professor.

The basic guidelines for MLA format:

- Font should be in Times New Roman, 12 point font.
- The paper should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins.
- Your in-text header will be flush left on the first page and should include your name, your professor's name, the title of the course, and the date of submission.
- The header should include your last name and the page number in the top right corner.
- Include a Works Cited as the last page of the paper, if applicable. For more information about how to format your paper in MLA format, please see our Lewis OWL [resource](#).

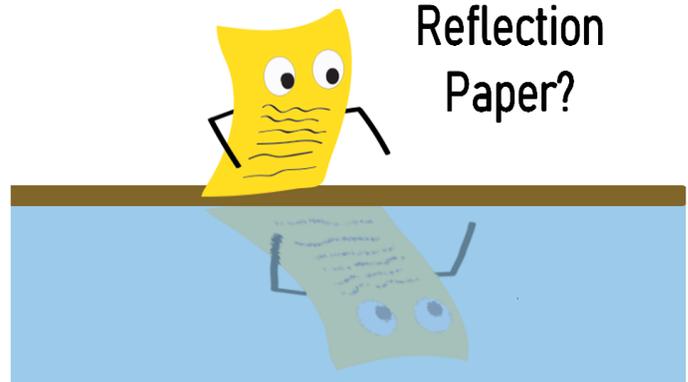
Helpful Tips

- Read example reflection papers before you start writing
- Create an outline to help you organize your thoughts
- Keep asking yourself reflective questions throughout your writing process!

What is Not Considered a Reflection?

- **Summaries:** Summaries briefly discuss the main points in the writer's own words. Reflections require you to use critical thinking to incorporate your own ideas.
- **Freewriting:** Freewriting is usually used as a pre-writing technique to get your thoughts down before you start writing. Once you do this, take these thoughts and use them to form a well-organized reflection. For more pre-writing tips, check out the [resource](#) on our OWL.
- **Journal entries:** Journal entries are typically used to list accounts of things that have happened and are more informal.

How to write a Reflection Paper?



Further Assistance: This resource is available at lewisuwritingcenter.wordpress.com. For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.