

PORTFOLIO SUMMATIVE REFLECTION

SAMPLE

As I reflect upon the four years worth of work in my portfolio, I can't help but feel a sense of accomplishment and pride. My journey through high school has not been without many trials and tribulations; however, I feel that my growth as an individual and student is a direct result of these experiences. The entries I have chosen to include in my showcase portfolio not only demonstrate proficiency in academic skills, such as reading, writing, problem solving, and oral communication, but also illustrate my story of growth.

Comment: Context set throughout first paragraph – story of growth

I entered the 9th grade as a somewhat shy student. I always received decent grades in Middle School but my confidence in my academic skills, especially in writing and oral communication, was lacking. I always had a difficult time getting my ideas down on paper and it would take me hours to write a three-paragraph essay. And, as far as getting up in front of the class, I was terrified. My hands would shake, I would sweat profusely, and I could never seem to get the words out without stuttering or losing my train of thought. Therefore, I was a little nervous entering high school, knowing I would be doing these types of work more often and on a bigger scale. I knew it was going to be tough, but I persevered. The first entry in my showcase portfolio is a good example of the humble beginnings of my journey. The entry is my 10th grade Modern World History common task entitled “God, Gold, and Glory” in which I had to write a response to informational text regarding the effects of New World discovery on the native American population. I chose this piece not because it is my best piece of writing, but it was my first piece of writing in high school to meet proficiency. Even though the essay barely met the standard (I still had problems with analyzing the documents beyond their literal meaning), I was

proud of the fact that I mastered the skills of writing a good thesis statement and organizing my thoughts coherently, because it was these parts of the writing process which always seemed to trip me up in the past and prevented me from achieving proficiency.

Comment: showing improvement; academic growth; skills acquired

Comment: making connections between life experience and abstract ideas – knowing and understanding the skill needed

Comment: continuing the theme; also shows the academic growth

The second entry illustrates my continued journey as an improving writer. The entry was a response to literature assignment, entitled “Old Horse” from my English 11 class. In this piece, I achieved proficiency on all the indicators of the rubric which was something I had never done before. In fact, I even scored a 4 on the Creates an Organizing Structure expectation. I could hardly contain myself when I received the score. You would have thought I won the lottery or someone told me I didn’t have to do the dreaded Exhibition project in order to graduate. I finally did it! I started to gain confidence as a writer and it was paying dividends as my grades in all my classes began to improve as well. But the crowning achievement came in the 1st Quarter of my senior year when I wrote a persuasive essay on the benefits of school uniforms for my School Law class. Not only did I receive a straight 4 on the essay but my teacher thought it was so good that she forwarded it to the school newspaper. They actually published it! The kid who feared writing was now published in a newspaper. Looking back, I have come a long way. I no longer fear writing, but actually enjoy it. I will say, however, it wasn’t easy to get to this point and have come to view writing as skill that needs constant practice and polishing.

Comment: analysis of condition for reflection

The fourth entry in my showcase portfolio is my Exhibition project. When I entered high school and learned of Exhibition graduation requirement, I nearly fainted on the spot. As I mentioned earlier, oral presentations and I were never compatible with each other. I had nightmares for three years about presenting my project to five (!) teachers and adults. But, I must say, the Exhibition process was the best learning experience of my high school career and I take the most pride in its completion. Collectively, my Exhibition project is a showcase, in itself,

of the many different skills I have mastered—reading, writing, critical thinking, problem solving, and oral communication. The thing which helped me the most during Exhibition was the realization that the Exhibition process was much like the writing process in its goal and organization—to construct a well-crafted analytical argument. I truly believe that this realization not only helped me get through Exhibition, but also supported the success I was seeing in my writing assignments for other classes at the same time. With the new-found confidence this was generating in me, I was able to deliver my argument to the judging panel without error.

Comment: skills achieved

The fifth entry in my showcase portfolio is from my 10th grade Geometry class. In an assignment called “Athletic Field 2”, I had to apply concepts of perimeter, circumference, area, and volume; make conversions within systems; and make decisions by using units of measures appropriately to determine the amount of material necessary to cover a field. I always was good at math. It was the one subject where I felt I didn’t have to worry about writing...or so I thought. I started to notice that in high school math teachers expected us to provide numerical answers and written explanations of how we came up with the answer. My safe haven now became a source of anxiety. It was on this task that I began to apply the lessons I learned in my other classes about the writing process. I earned a three on the task, but, most importantly for me, my teacher commented that I did an excellent job in explaining my answer—one more notch in confidence belt.

The final piece in my showcase portfolio is the independent research paper on regenerative medicine that I submitted in my AP Biology class at the end of my junior year. I believe this is a great example of all the skills I acquired by the need of my junior year. In this assignment, I applied the research and critical thinking skills I learned through doing Exhibition

Comment: skills achieved

and the writing skills I had been developing in all my classes. As a result, I earned the top grade in my class.

In conclusion, the pieces included in my showcase portfolio illustrate my story of academic and personal growth. I went from a shy, timid kid to someone who shines with confidence. I feel assured that the skills and lessons I learned while completing the work for my portfolio will carry me through life and bring more success. Confidence is truly the key to success; and practice and perseverance will help you attain that key—these are my words to live by.

Comment: preparedness for the future; also; leaving the reader for "something to think about"

Comment: what does the portfolio say about you as a person