

The Reflection Paper

The Reflection Paper is an assignment that requires the writer to consider how their personal experiences and observations shape their thinking and their acceptance of new ideas or practices. It is discipline and course specific and might take the form of a short paper on course readings, or a response to a service placement opportunity. Therefore, students must check their syllabus and/or rubric to ensure they include all the requirements of the assignment.

Key traits of a reflection paper are:

- The writer connects the course readings with their knowledge and experience in order to further comprehend the readings. Therefore, the first-person pronoun “I” is welcomed.
- The writer questions their assumptions about course readings or service placement opportunities; it also challenges the writer to reflect on their previous beliefs and arrive at a more complex, or new understanding of a reading or issue (Trent University, n.d.).
- A reflection paper can have an open format that explores and connects course content with life experience(s).
- While the reflection paper does not need a thesis statement, it is often argumentative.
- The reflection paper does not need to be conclusive, but can identify gaps in knowledge, make connections, or challenge prior beliefs (University of Toronto, 2014).

As with other academic writing, a reflection paper will include all four components of an essay. These consist of:

- **An Introductory paragraph:** This will identify the paper’s topic, describe the major course concept/theory and state what the paper is going to explore/argue.
- **Body Paragraph(s):** Describe the situation or context being analyzed, the writer describes their reaction or experience and then connects the experience to the theory.

- **Conclusion:** The writer summarizes what they've learned and discusses how these lessons may impact or influence them in the future.
- **Citations:** Check instructions to see which citation style is required.

Note: While this is an excellent source of reference, students are encouraged to check their syllabus and/or rubric to ensure they include all the requirements of an assignment.

References

Trent University, (n.d.). *How to write a reflection paper*.

<https://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/how-guides/how-write-university/how-approach-any-assignment/how-write-reflection-paper>

University of Toronto at Scarborough, (2014). *The reflection paper*.

<https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/sites/utsc.utoronto.ca.twc/files/resource-files/Reflection%20Paper.pdf>