

WHAT TO PUT INTO THE REFLECTIVE ESSAY FOR YOUR FINAL PORTFOLIO

Your assignment in the reflective essay is to discuss how your portfolio illustrates your development as a writer during this semester. As with any essay assignment, you must articulate an overall idea: **How does my portfolio reflect the writing skills and strategies identified in the seven student portfolio goals?** To develop that idea, you must describe how your portfolio shows that you understand and have used the practices described in each of the goals. Use the bulleted questions beneath each goal as guides. The essay should be organized to address the seven goals in order; you may use subheadings if you wish. Each time you address a question, you must refer to your portfolio and cite specific essays (title, page, and paragraph number).

Explain how your portfolio demonstrates:

GOAL 1 That you used a multi-stage process for your writing and that you took into consideration feedback you may have received from peers, instructors, tutors and/or other readers.

- How did prewriting activities guide your choices in your writing?
- How did using a recursive writing process work towards improving focus in your writing and the development of your main idea? What ideas or information did you add or remove? Did you change the order of sentences or paragraphs? Why?
- Where can you show that feedback from others during the writing of your essay helped to improve it?
- How did you work towards making your writing clear and convincing to others?
- Explain how using the writing process (from start to finish) has helped your thinking/ understanding of issues in your papers to evolve and deepen?

GOAL 2 That you consistently made choices in your writing based on your audience, your purpose, and the context of the reason for writing.

[Evidence of audience, purpose, and context might be reflected in your choice of vocabulary, organizational structure, tone, types of information/sources used.]

- What decisions did you make to target an audience, and what evidence shows that you succeeded?
- How have time, place, culture, and circumstances influenced the choices you made in developing your paper?

GOAL 3 That you understand that writing is a process that not only communicates ideas, but that creates and shapes ideas as part of that process. Texts—yours, as well as those of published authors—present ideas in different ways, depending on the goal, how they are developed, and the form they take.

[This could include analysis of published writings, discussion of peer review work, and your analysis--with specific references--of how you developed your own writing and thinking.]

- What evidence shows that you have critiqued your own and/or others' work, either published authors or your peers?
- What evidence shows you have used writing to explore, learn, communicate, and persuade? This could include examples of places where you pose questions, look at an

issue or question from several points of view, take a position, and/or aim to change a reader's point of view.

- What evidence shows that you understand how all texts--print, electronic and/or visual texts (movies, web sites, advertisements, blogs)—shape and deliver messages to viewers? This could include your use of any or all of these media as sources and your analysis of how they contribute to a larger discussion.

GOAL 4 That you understand both the conventions of Standard Written English suitable for an academic audience and other conventions suitable to other audiences and/or contexts?

- How does your writing demonstrate your mastery of the appropriate choices regarding grammar and mechanical conventions in terms of the demands of the writing task?
- How does your writing illustrate that you have adapted your tone, vocabulary, and style to be appropriate to a selected audience, genre and context?

GOAL 5 That you have synthesized your experience and insight with information from a range of outside sources?

[Sources of information can include observations, interviews, television, film, websites, and other electronic media--like My Space, Facebook, YouTube, iPods--as well as books, newspapers, and magazines.]

- What roles have the university databases and other technologies played in helping you find and/or interpret appropriate source material?
- Where can you show that you have mastered the techniques of using signal phrases to introduce your sources and follow-up comments to blend your source's ideas into your own text?

GOAL 6 That you understand the principles and practices of academic honesty?

- Describe the method(s) by which you found and used ideas from outside sources, for example, summarizing or paraphrasing, using response journals, double-entry journals, or any other technique which translates a source's ideas into your own language.
- What measures did you take to blend sources smoothly into your own text while still making clear to your readers whose ideas they are reading: yours or the other authors'?

GOAL 7 That you understand a writer's ethical responsibilities?

- How did you seek to genuinely understand your topic beyond your initial impressions or long-held opinions? What evidence shows you've reached a more complex level of understanding this content?
- How did you decide that the sources you used are reliable and appropriate?
- Where can you show that you prioritized reasonable appeals over emotional appeals?
- Where can you show that you both acknowledged and treated others' views respectfully?