

Reflective Writing: How to Begin

Some writing assignments ask you to reflect on or critique something (such as a clinical experience, a scholarly article, a theatre performance, or a case study).

If you're not sure what to write about in a reflection assignment, the following questions will help you generate extra ideas that you could include in your paper.

Describe the situation or topic.

- What is it? Who was involved?
- Where? When? How? How long?
- Can you use your senses to describe it? What does it look like, sound like, feel like, smell like, taste like?
- What details can you add (specific names, places, dates, numbers, descriptions)?

What struck you as **important**?

- What was new to you?
- What surprised you?
- What grabbed your attention the most?
- What did you learn?

How did it make you **feel**?

- Good feelings? Bad feelings? Positive? Negative?
- What did it make you remember or think about in your own experience?

How is it the **same** or **different** from something else?

- Can you think of another thing, event, person, or concept that is either similar to or different from your topic?
- What is similar? How is it similar? In what ways is it similar?
- How is it different? In what ways is it different?

What is your **opinion** or judgment of the situation?

- "I think ..." " It seems to me that ..."
- What part do you agree with or approve of? What part do you disagree with or disapprove of?
- Is it better or worse than something else that you can compare it to?
- Can you identify extremes (highest/lowest; best/worst; most/least)?
- Can you identify different levels of something (good, okay, better, worse, average)?

What **implications** do you see?

- What significance does this have for different people who are involved? How will it impact each of them? Why?
- How will this change perceptions, realities, behaviours, or possibilities? Why?
- What difference does this make? Why?
- On a scale, how much impact (little, some, a lot, a great deal) will this have? Why?
- What other areas, aspects, or dimensions of the issue will this affect?