

Reflection Essay Guidelines

Students will be required to submit a written self-evaluation of their Senior Project experience. Students are asked to keep a daily journal of their experiences during the Senior Projects. The main purpose of this journal is to provide a sound foundation for the written report. The advantage of keeping a daily journal is obvious. Many of you will be entering a world of new impressions crowding in on you at a great rate; trying to recollect your reactions to them several weeks later will be difficult. Sometimes the results prove superficial or inadequate, so it is better to write when the thoughts and feelings are fresh and clear, and the pressure of a deadline is not hovering over you. You may wish to schedule the final ten minutes of your daily commitment as a time for reflection and review. Be sure to discuss this with your mentor. We do not want the Senior Project report to become just another paper due during the course of the year.

The report should be 500-1000 words. The committee suggests that the student have the faculty mentor, a committee member, or another trusted advisor review the draft. The Senior Project Committee encourages students to meet with their English teachers and mentor to review the final draft, which will enter the permanent Senior Project collection to be held in the archives and in the library. The final draft should include photographs, charts, graphs, or other images particular to the project. It may also include electronic copies of movies, music, power point presentations, Pod casts, or other electronic productions.

- *Ideas:* This reflection essay should give the reader a sense of what you did during your project, but it should also reveal what you learned about yourself, about the world, and about the field you were working in. Be sure to engage the audience's interest in the experience, using well-placed and vivid anecdotes is one way to get the reader involved.
- *Reasoning:* The essay should present clear ideas and logical reasoning. Show the reader how you came to the conclusions or awareness that you gained from your project.
- *Organization:* The essay should be a well-ordered presentation of your discoveries.
- *Voice:* Your essay should be carefully crafted and edited, but the tone of a reflection essay is often personal and down to earth. You are not so much worried about impressing your reader as you are in entering into a dialogue with them about your project and your discoveries. You might imagine that you are explaining what you did and what you learned and the strengths and weaknesses of your experience to a thoughtful older friend.
- *Conventions:* Your essay should be grammatically correct. It should contain an appropriate vocabulary and a variety of sentence and structures and lengths. You should edit your essay carefully and ask your peers or adults to assist you in producing a final product that allows the reader to focus on your insights and not superficial errors.
- *Introspection:* Reflect on the experience and show evidence that you have learned from it. Show a depth of understanding.
- *Presentation:* Your final reflection essay should be presented in 12 pt. Times New Roman. It should have 1" margins all around, and should include a cover page that identifies the year, your name, and the title of your reflection essay.

Here are some prompts to help you think about your essay:

- Read a few journal entries
- Make a list of surprises you encountered during your work. Explain some of those discoveries.
- Make a list of people you worked with. Discuss the importance of those people in your learning and experiences during the project period.
- Describe the process you used to create something and how the actual process differed from your plans.
- Choose one important discovery about yourself during this project and track how you came to this discovery, create verbal snapshots of each step along the path to this important discovery.
- Explain to your audience how to do something you had to do during your project.
- If you took pictures or crafted drawings, insert them into your document.
- Talk about what you did, what you learned, and any misconceptions that were dispelled. An illustrative story would help your audience share your experience. How did you feel on your first day? On your last day? What happened in between? How did the whole experience make you feel? How will you use this experience in the future?

Reflection Essay Rubric

	An Approved Essay Will	A Disapproved Essay Will
Ideas	Give the reader a sense of what you did during your project and reveal what you learned about yourself, about the world, and about the field you were working in. It will engage the audience's interest in the experience.	Give the reader very little sense of the experience and its meaning for the student.
Reasoning	Present clear and logical reasoning. Show the reader how you came to new understanding or awareness.	Have serious flaws in reasoning. Show little awareness of new insight or understanding or of the goals and methods of the project.
Organization	Be a well-ordered presentation your learning and experiences.	Have no clear organizing principle. It may seem hastily arranged or written without conscious design.
Voice	Be carefully crafted in order to engage the reader in your learning and experiences.	Show very little awareness for the needs to the audience or the purpose of the essay.
Conventions	Be grammatically correct. Contain a varied vocabulary and effective syntax.	Have a build up of errors that make it difficult to understand.
Introspection	Reflect on the experience and show evidence that you have learned from it. Show a depth of understanding.	Show very little self-awareness or understanding. Very little engagement in thinking about what and how you learned during the project period.
Presentation	Follow prescribed format.	Not follow format directed in the Senior Program Packet.