

Reflective essay

Objective

Write a short essay (2-4 pages, double-spaced) that reflects on your learning this semester.

Directions

This assignment asks you to write thoughtfully about your experiences this semester. What have you learned? How have you grown as a thinker, writer, reader, person? Follow these steps:

1. **Think about the topic:** do some focused freewriting. What did you know and think about early British literature before the course began? How have your thoughts or knowledge changed? In your opinion, what were some highlights of the course? What was especially challenging?
2. **Gather evidence:** review your goals and work in the course. Revisit your weekly check-in surveys, the course goals in the syllabus, and your graded assignments. What stands out to you in this evidence of your progress? How have you worked toward the goal you set for yourself in Week 1? You might also glance back at discussion forums, quizzes, or readings to help you recall where you were most engaged.
3. **Write an essay that answers some of the questions that follow.** Your answers will be your main points. As you write, refer to experiences in our course—readings, assignments, discussions—that show your growth, engagement, and interest. These will be your evidence.

Questions to address

You are not required to answer all of these questions, and please do not try to do so. Instead, select one (or maybe two) in each section.

British literature

- What did you think about early British literature in August compared to now?
- What one topic or theme most interests you in our course texts, and how does our literature treat that topic in the historical periods we covered?
- What is the value of studying early British literature in 2021?
- How does early British culture compare to our own?
- How does a particular theme, author, or work speak to your life in 2021?
- How you would explain early British literature to someone who didn't take the course?

Personal growth and interests

- What have you learned or how have you grown this semester?
- How well did you achieve your individual goal for this course?
- What were the most challenging and rewarding parts of the course or semester for you and why?
- How does your work in this course show who you are as a learner, thinker, writer, or reader?
- What did you learn about yourself (as a student and overall person) during the last semester? Consider skills, knowledge, and perspectives.

Looking ahead to the future

- What do you still want to learn, read, or do after this course?
- How you will continue to improve as a student?
- What advice you would give to future students in the course?
- How might your learning in this course help you in your future courses, career, or other aspects of your life?

Grading criteria

A solid effort will result in a solid grade. I will look for depth and clarity of reflection (thoughtfulness), along with how well the essay explains its points with evidence drawn from your work and thinking this semester. This assignment is worth ten points. I will assign points as follows:

10 = The essay answers at least three questions (one in each category: British literature, personal growth, and future) and does so effectively, using specific and relevant examples. The essay is clearly organized and clearly written. It is thoughtful and submitted on time.

8 = The essay answers one or two questions and lacks specific examples, but is still thoughtful and clear. Or it answers at least three questions but does so with less detail or clarity.

6 = The essay only partially follows instructions. It might be too short or seem hastily written, or it is posted late without an arranged extension.

4 = The essay has fairly major problems. It is unclear and unfocused, but there is some small attempt to do the assignment.

2 = Something is submitted, but it doesn't follow the directions.

0 = Nothing is submitted.

I might also assign in-between numbers, like a "9" for an essay that falls between an "8" and a "10."

Formatting guidelines

Please submit essays as Word documents (.docx). Number your pages. Include the following in the top corner of your paper: Your name, English 2201, Professor Kolkovich, and date you turn in the

essay. Give it a title: "End of Semester Reflection" or "Reflective Essay" is fine. A creative title is welcome too.

Tips

- This is your story—no one else's. There are no right or wrong answers.
- A Google search won't help you reflect on your learning. I expect no Internet-searching or other research for this assignment (beyond reading your own work). If you bring outside sources into your reflection for some reason, cite them in your text and in a works cited page. If you quote from our course texts, cite them as well.
- This is a personal essay, so first-person narration ("I" and "me") is appropriate.
- Your audience is yourself and me (your instructor). While I will not expect you to be rigidly formal, I will expect clear organization and complete sentences.
- There is not one "right" way to do this. You may organize it however you wish. You might use headers to divide it into three parts (British literature, personal growth, and future), write a more unified essay that explores those three categories as parts of a whole, or use a different approach. What's most important is that your reflection is a thoughtful piece of writing.

Resources

- [Handouts on writing issues](#)
- [OSU Mansfield Writing Center](#), for help talking through ideas and improving drafts
- Prof. Kolkovich's office hours

Academic integrity

- **Getting help on the assignment** is permitted.
- **Completing the assignment with others** is **not** permitted.
- **Copying previous work** without revision is **not** permitted. However, you may (and should) mention things you've written or done in the class.
- **Open-book research** using your course text is permitted.