

Reflection

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover reflection—why it's so important and how it benefits the writer:

1. [Reflection in the Writing Process](#)
2. [Benefits of Reflection](#)

1. Reflection in the Writing Process

Reflection is when the writer contemplates what he or she's learned about his or her topic and about the writing process from a specific writing project.

Thus as a writer, this is when you get the chance to think about writing through the lens of your own writing. There are lots of things you might think about as you reflect on your writing—some good and some bad.

However, some of the most productive reflections happen when you consider questions such as:

- What have you learned from the process of writing this project?
- What do you think about the project?
- How might your perspectives have changed over the process?
- What problems did you encounter during the process?
- What solutions did you discover?
- What questions do you still have about the process or the project itself?

This kind of reflection can take place at any stage of the writing process, but it's especially important to include time for reflection as the project winds to a close. Then you can take a moment to think about what you have done as you prepare to exit this project and perhaps enter the next one.



HINT

When you receive a final grade on a paper with notes from the instructor or grader, it is usually too late to improve *that* assignment, but the feedback can aid your reflection by knowing your own strengths and

areas for improvement that can be applied to the next writing assignment.

Most of the time, writers will do this reflection on their own as a chance to meditate internally, but you may find that reflection is occasionally built into the assignment for a class.



TERM TO KNOW

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2. Benefits of Reflection

At first, it may seem redundant to spend valuable time thinking about something that you've already spent so much time thinking about; however, this kind of reflection will help you as a writer in the long run.

This is because when you reflect on your work, you get the chance to:

- Learn about the writing process from the inside.
- Notice weak spots in your own writing where you want to focus your energy to improve in the future.
- See what you've learned while completing the project that you might want to apply to the next project.

Overall, doing this kind of careful thinking will help all writers improve and become better at writing.



TRY IT

Take a moment to see how reflection might work. First, read the following short essay.

Schools should do more to help returning, non-traditional, and working students succeed.

Many students struggle to succeed in college for reasons outside of their control. They don't struggle because they're not intelligent or driven. They struggle because they have to balance school responsibilities with life duties. They may work full time, care for their families, and still have to spend their scant free time in classes. This can present a real challenge.

One thing schools could do is offer more online, evening, or weekend classes. These kinds of classes are easier to fit into busy schedules. Professors could make deadlines more flexible to allow students to better manage their timing. Classes could offer more resources online so that students can access support at odd hours and from wherever they happen to be.

All of these changes will benefit many students. They will be particularly useful for the most busy and overworked students. By implementing such policies, colleges could make earning a degree more plausible.

Now read this short reflection on that essay, and consider what insights the author has gained about the process.

This was an easy topic for me to write about because I have a personal connection to the issues. So when I sat down to do prewriting, all kinds of ideas came out. I used a clustering method to make connections between those ideas, which helped as I was connecting the same ideas in the paragraphs later. I noticed when I was rereading that the paragraphs jump from one idea to the next kind of quickly, so I think I could probably spend more time writing transitions. Overall, my sentences are pretty short and I don't always connect ideas, even when I could. So I'll work on that more next time.

You can see here that the author has gained new perspective on both the writing process and the finished project. As the author says, making connections between ideas during the early phase of brainstorming helped her connect more clearly the eventual paragraphs that those ideas would become.

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This is a skill that she might want to replicate in her next assignment. You can also see that the author knows that she struggles with sentence variety and tends to write in short, choppy prose.

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She now knows that she wants to devote more energy to that element of her writing in her next project. All told, this reflection has given the author the opportunity to reassess her feelings about not just the product itself, but the whole process of writing. Knowing what she knows now, this author is ready to tackle her next assignment even more successfully.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial, you learned about **reflection in the writing process**, which involves contemplating what you have learned about both your writing project and the writing process as a whole.

You now understand the **benefits of reflection**: learning about the writing process from the inside, noticing weak spots in your writing that you want to focus on improving in the future, and seeing what you've learned during the project that might be applicable to the next project. These benefits make reflection a valuable skill for all writers.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Martina Shabram.



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