

How to Write a *Critical and Reflective* Journal Entry

The journal entries for this course should exhibit critical reflection. If you are unfamiliar with this type of writing these prompts may help you.

Prompt A: Write a Critical, Reflective Reaction Paper Based Upon a Feeling

Consider the topic about which you will write: how do you *feel*? Focus on articulating a specific feeling, a particular, precise emotion that this issue brings up for you. What is the possible range of emotions? Why might readers respond with curiosity, anxiety, interest, fear, anger, confusion, boredom, disinterest, resentment, shame, or any other feeling that was evoked or could be evoked by the topic? Keep in mind that your feeling may not represent the only possible reaction to this text. Look both within and outside yourself.

When you have identified your emotion try to locate its source or cause. Why do you think you have this feeling about the issue? Try to identify the source as precisely as you can. Use specific examples to support and explain your analysis.

Prompt B: Write a Critical, Reflective Reaction Paper Based Upon Intellect

Now that you've identified your emotional response, what do you think? On a cognitive level, what do you *think* and *know* about the issue? This line of inquiry relies less on emotion and more on intellect. What do you believe, perceive, understand, remember, and connect to? What knowledge is most relevant or important for understanding this topic? How important do you perceive this issue to be, why and to whom? Is it important personally or generally, nationally or regionally?

When you have identified a key issue or question, consider: What skills do you have that will help you interpret this issue/question? What information do you have that you think connects to this issue or question? What things do you not understand clearly? Do you have historical perspectives that are associated? Are your current perspectives different from the ones you had previously? Did you have misconceptions about this issue? If so, what were they? What additional information would you like to have? You could do some further research and read additional sources on your topic for your reflection to incorporate other perspectives.

Some journal entries will focus primarily on Prompt A, others Prompt B. All journals should begin with a clear focus. I strongly suggest that you place your main idea or argument focus in the first paragraph. Remember you need to write at least one journal entry of 1-2 typed pages each week. Please include a title, your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date. Finally, don't forget to proofread your paper before printing and submitting it to your instructor.

When you put the answers to the above questions and others of a similar nature together in a coherent, fluid paper, you have a journal entry that is reflective and critical. Happy writing!