

Reflective Writing

Writing Centre Learning Guide

Reflective language refers to the use of words and expressions that convey introspection, contemplation, or consideration of one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. It involves expressing and examining one's own thoughts, emotions, and actions in a thoughtful and self-aware manner. Reflective language is often characterised by a focus on personal insights, self-analysis, and the exploration of one's own perspectives.

Academic Texts vs. Reflective Texts

The language used for reflective texts differs from that used in academic texts. This is because the purpose of the two texts differs: academic texts inform readers about a topic and, therefore, must use objective language, while reflective texts reflect on and interpret an experience in one's own words and, therefore, must use subjective language. Due to the objective nature of academic texts, it is important to avoid personal pronouns, such as "I" or "we", while the subjective nature of a reflective text requires you to use these personal pronouns. Academic texts will also be heavily reliant on their references to support the information they present, while reflective texts will be heavily based on your own interpretation of events, using references only in the evaluation paragraph and only if your lecturer has said to use them. As reflective texts are less formal than academic texts, but not entirely informal, it is still important to avoid contractions, such as "don't" or "didn't".

Academic Text (Formal)	Reflective Text (Semi-Formal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informative style ▪ Objective ▪ Lack of personal pronouns ▪ Information based on references ▪ Avoid contractions, e.g. "don't" or "didn't" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Narrative/interpretive style ▪ Subjective ▪ Uses personal pronouns, especially "I" ▪ Information based on memory, interpretation based on references (Only if your lecturer has said to use them) ▪ Avoid contractions, e.g. "don't" or "didn't"

Verbs for Reflection

There are three main types of verbs that are important to the act of reflecting: material verbs, behavioural verbs, and mental verbs. Material verbs take place in the 'real world' and describe most actions that take place around us. Behavioural verbs describe our interaction with the world through our senses (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling).

1	Material Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe actions that take place in the 'real world'
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WRITING CENTRE

Level 3, Hub Central
North Terrace campus, The University of Adelaide

writingcentre@adelaide.edu.au
www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used to describe the scenario <p>For example, “While on placement, I checked patients’ temperatures and recorded them for handover”.</p>
2	Behavioural Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe your interaction with the world ▪ Used to explain your place in the scenario <p>For example, “One day, I overheard a doctor complaining about the nurses I was working with” or “I was careful to listen to every instruction I was given”.</p>
3	Mental Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe what is happening in your head ▪ Used to demonstrate your thoughts, feelings and discoveries <p>For example, “I thought it seemed very unprofessional”, “I believe this was the best course of action”, or “I was worried that I did the wrong thing”.</p>

Structure

The structure of a reflective writing assignment can vary depending on its purpose. If you are reflecting on a scenario, for example something that happened to you in your own past experience, you may choose to use the DIEP (describe, interpret, evaluate, and plan) structure. If you are reflecting on a work placement, you may find the STAR structure more appropriate. There are two types of STAR models. The STAR-L model is structured with the following components: Situation, Task, Action, Result, Learning. This may be used if the aim of the assignment is to reflect on what you learnt, so that you can improve in the future. Meanwhile, the STAR-P model is structured with the following components: Situation, Task, Action, Review, Planning. This may be used after creating and implementing a particular project with the aim of reviewing the project and making any necessary changes in the future. If you are unsure which of these is appropriate for your assessment task, consult your lecturer.