

Self-Reflective Essay

A vital part of your portfolio is your reflective statement. The purpose of your reflective statement is to show your professor and the program that you understand and have learned the key concepts in the course.

This is an opportunity to show your growth as a writer by walking your reader through some of your thinking about the major essays from the course. For each of your essays, you will discuss your writing through the lenses of specific core values (the core values to discuss for each essay are below) to demonstrate to your reader how you understand and are applying concepts from the course. The questions that correspond to each core value below are for generating ideas—you are not obligated to answer all of them.

Note that you are being asked to discuss all three essays, including your non-portfolio essay. This is because we can learn and grow from any piece of writing, even those that are less successful than others. Feel free to talk through challenges you faced and what you might do differently if you had more time. For this statement, the quality of the reflection is what matters: that you offer insights into your own writing process and demonstrate an understanding of the core values and learning outcomes, even if you haven't mastered those values or outcomes.

A reflective statement that is of minimal passing quality will identify specific passages from assignments in the course and analyze them; however, a reflective statement that is of excellent quality will talk through the specific informed, rhetorical choices that the student made through specific portions of assignments in the course. By contrast, a weak or insufficient reflective statement will make little to no reference to the assignments in the course, or those references will be tangential or vague.

Tip: Introduce each essay before diving into your discussion of how it allowed you to practice the core values. Pretend your reader is unfamiliar with the essay. And feel free to personalize this: this statement is about you, so include your reactions and feelings to these writing experiences. You should use “I” throughout this document, not “we”—in other words, discuss what YOU have done in your writing, not what WE have done as a class.

Core values of Rowan's First Year Writing program: <https://www.rowanfyw.org/core-values-icci>

What to Do: This reflection should be written in 3 sections—one for each project! You should spend at least one paragraph talking about each core value, in the order listed below. If you have a lot to say about one, it is acceptable to use more than one paragraph to discuss it. As mentioned above, I recommend introducing each essay at the beginning of the section. In other words, spend a few sentences or a very short paragraph summarizing for a reader who is not in our class.

Essay 1: Exploratory Essay on Teens' Technology/Smartphone Use

CV1 *MULTI-STAGE*

- Can you describe how you used a multi-stage process in?
- How did you persevere through the many stages of writing the Writing Process essay?
- When your classmates commented on your essay during peer review OR when I commented on it during conferences, were you open to making changes? Can you give an example of where and how you made changes to the essay? Or if you ignored the advice... why?
- Choose the section of Essay #1 that changed the most through revision...
 - o Did you revise through editing? (i.e. Punctuation? Sentence structure?)
 - o Did it change because you moved entire sections around? Changed quotes? Etc.?

CV2 *ANALYZE—SYNTHESIZE*

- For the Exploratory Essay, we read 3 sources with very different perspectives and structures. Can you describe what it was like to read these sources? (i.e. Easy? Difficult)? What did you have to do to fully understand each author's meaning? (i.e. Re-read? Listen to class discussion? What else?) Describe.
- You read, discussed understood the texts *then* described your own process...
 - How did you synthesize the ideas of the authors with your own process?
 - You can talk about Essay #1 and the Critical Engagement Assignment for this core value. If you discuss the CE Assignment, include how it helped prepare you for the essay or how you included some of the ideas in your essay.

Essay 2: Rhetorical Analysis of an Advertisement**CV3** *WRITING IS SHAPED BY AUDIENCE, CONTEXT, & PURPOSE*

- In this essay, we used different kinds of sources, including an informational text, a chapter from a textbook, a video lecture, and an article. How is the audience different for each source you used? How do the word choice, tone, etc. change depending on the audience?
- You were asked to analysis an ad that your reader may not have seen. Describe how this impacted your discussion of the ad in your essay.
- In analyzing your ad, you had to consider the audience, purpose, and context of the ad and what design choices the advertisers made based on these elements. Describe how you were able to make these determinations. (i.e. Using the Analysis Worksheet? Watching the ad over and over? Taking notes?)
- Describe how you adjusted your writing, tone, language to write Essay #2 in comparison to Essay #1.

Essay 3: Research Company Branding and Values**CV4** *INFORMATION LITERACY*

- Describe how you knew that the sources you used for this were reputable (trustworthy). You can talk about the sources assigned for class and those you found on your own.
- Describe how you found your own sources and incorporated them into your essay.
- Describe what it was like to use different types of sources (YouTube, news articles, well-known magazines like the New York Times or Forbes, company review websites like Indeed.com, etc.)

CV5 *ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF WRITING*

- Describe how you are able to use the author's words and message as s/he intended? That is, you are using quotes and/or paraphrasing *without* changing the meaning to fit your message.
- Describe how you draw a "line" between your voice and the voice of the author. How do you "cue" the reader to know "this is my idea" and "this is the author's"?
- The purpose of this essay is to uncover some kind of truth about the company and to share that with your reader. Discuss how this fits with the idea that "writing has power and comes with ethical responsibility."