

Final Reflective Essay Prompt

Why is reflection important (From [Purdue University's Department of English](#))

Reflection— a process where students describe their learning, how it changed, and how it might relate to future learning experiences (“[Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind](#),” 2008) —is a skill that often goes undervalued in classrooms that are packed with content. However, reflection is an important practice for students to make sense of and grow from a learning experience, and it is a practice backed by scholarship. [A 2014 study by Harvard](#) also confirmed that reflecting on one’s work improves job performance. Although often situated in the humanities and social sciences, reflection is an important practice across academic disciplines including nursing, business, the sciences, and more (see [WAC Clearinghouse](#) for a list of disciplinary reflection articles). As a result, reflective writing is one great method for students to reflect on their learning experiences in the English 106/108 classroom. Students, therefore, should be exposed to continuous reflective writing practices so that they become “producers” and not “consumers” of knowledge ([Costa and Kallick, 2008](#)).

[What is reflective writing?](#)

-All the short reflection assignments this semester are examples of reflective writing

Final Reflective Essay

Students will write a 2-3 page letter (typed, 12 point font, and single spaced) to a prospective St. Olaf student reflecting back on what they have learned this semester in hopes that the prospective student might be more successful when they arrive on the St. Olaf Campus in the Fall.

This letter should focus on important discoveries during the FYS course in four main areas:

- 1) **academic development**

- Developing time management skills, balancing demands of their classes and homework with other aspects of college life.
- Experiencing learning moments about overcoming failure and/or developing a growth mindset.
- Engaging with diverse perspectives through coursework that enhanced learning

2) co-curricular involvement

- Developing time management skills
- How participating in specific co-curricular activities helped develop their identities (i.e. athlete) and impacted their first semester

3) living in community here at St. Olaf

- Making friends and learning to live with others
- Benefits of being exposed to other perspectives
- Learning more about their identities as a result of interacting with those who are different from them

4) learning about and experiencing embodiment/movement/dance

Students should use their introductory self-portrait (Short Reflection assignment #1) and the other short reflection assignments throughout the semester to help with this as well as reflecting back on our many class discussions. Students should also reflect back on other class assignments including the readings, video viewings, individual research project, and the Group Creative project and how they approached and completed these assignments.

This final reflective prospective student letter will be **due by the final exam period, Sat. May 18th at 1pm uploaded to Moodle.**

Reflective Essay Guide and Rubric			
Outcome	Demonstrating	Emerging	Beginning
Purpose			

Think about (reflect on) your important discoveries during this course			
Imagine and explain your important discoveries and how these might help a prospective student be more successful.			
Focus			
Respond to the question(s) posed in the assignment			
Present and discuss experiences in your academic development, co-curricular involvement, living in community, and learning about and experiencing embodiment/movement/dance.			
Introduce focus early in the letter (what the intent of the letter is)			
Organize ideas with logic appropriate to the purpose			
Evidence			
Present relevant examples, personal experience, research, or details to support claims			
Outcome	Demonstrating	Emerging	Beginning

<p>Present ideas and evidence through language that shows audience (prospective student) awareness</p>			
<p>Communicate through grammar and mechanics that enable your audience to understand the essay's ideas.</p>			
<p>Follow the letter format guidelines (2-3 pages, single spaced, 12 point font)</p>			
<p>Evaluation Key:</p> <p>Demonstrating: Completes the required action Emerging: Completes the required action with some lapses in form or content Beginning: Shows awareness of the task but doesn't yet complete required action</p>			