

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# REFLECTIVE WRITING



When you write a **reflection**, you write your thoughts about something, rather than writing a summary or description of that something itself.

If you want to get a deeper understanding of what you read or what you see, write a reflective paper. (“Writing a reflection” and “writing a reflective paper” mean the same thing.)

It’s easier to do than you think, because anything that comes into your mind is OK to write about, as long as it’s related to the subject of the paper (the book, the movie, the event, etc.)

A reflection gives the reader a good understanding of **how you feel** or **what you think about** the subject.

## WHAT should you write?

Don’t spend too much time describing or summarizing. The person reading your essay has read the same book or seen the same movie.

First, think about the subject. Then, write about how it makes you feel, how it relates to your life, what you think will happen next, what you would have done if you were there, etc. Here are some ways to start reflective sentences:

### Reflective sentence starters

- ✓ I was surprised that...
- ✓ I can’t believe that \_\_\_\_\_ acted the way she did, because...
- ✓ The scene where \_\_\_\_\_ reminded me of when I was younger. I also found out \_\_\_\_\_...
- ✓ The scene with the \_\_\_\_\_ gave me the creeps. How could...
- ✓ I agree with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, because...
- ✓ Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ was foolish to \_\_\_\_\_ because now she won’t be able to ever...
- ✓ Later in the book, I think that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is going to...
- ✓ If I were there, I would have stopped the...
- ✓ The beginning of the book made me think that \_\_\_\_\_, but now I’m wondering whether or not...

what it  
**IS** ✓  
...and  
what it  
**ISN'T** ✗

Here's an example of what reflection is, and what it isn't. The subject of the reflective paragraph will be this picture:



### Reflective

✓ This picture makes me feel so sad for the poor man sitting on his sofa. The man looks devastated by what looks like a terrible storm. I wonder how he'll rebuild his life? I wonder if he lost any family members in the storm? I remember last year when a tornado almost touched down in our neighborhood, and how scared I was. If I were there, I'd try to help him find his things and help him get something to eat. Maybe people who see pictures like this will get together to try to build stronger houses that don't fall apart like this.

The reader knows a lot about your reaction to the picture, what questions you're asking about it, and how it relates to your life experiences.

### NOT reflective

✗ A man is sitting in a chair inside what used to be a house. He's wearing a white shirt and blue jeans. There is debris all over the place and the house is heavily damaged. The man looks sad. He is sitting on a beige sofa. The sky is cloudy. There aren't any other people in the picture.

The reader doesn't learn anything by your essay. She's seen the picture, too. She has no idea how you feel or what you think about the picture.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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8  
tasks**SHOW  
THAT  
YOU KNOW**

Complete all these tasks and show that you know what it means to write something reflective.

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**First, read this:**

- 1 Mrs. Danvers tapped her foot, staring down at her nephew Jerome who had just spilled grape juice on the carpet. Jerome started crying loudly, knowing what was coming next. He backed away from his aunt, shaking his head and saying, “No! No! It was an accident!” He tripped on a purple-splashed toy, sprawling across the floor on his back, crying, and Mrs. Danvers took a terrible step toward him.

**For each sentence, circle YES if it’s reflective and NO if it isn’t.**

- |   |     |    |  |   |                          |
|---|-----|----|--|---|--------------------------|
| 2 | YES | NO | Someone needs to call the police on Mrs. Danvers, because she obviously mistreats Jerome.  | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | YES | NO | This paragraph upsets me, because I can’t stand it when people are unkind to little children.  | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | YES | NO | Where in the world are Jerome’s parents? I hope he tells them about what his aunt did to him.  | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | YES | NO | Jerome spilled grape juice on the carpet, and it made his aunt, Mrs. Danvers, very mad.  | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | YES | NO | Mrs. Danvers taps her foot when something happens that gets her irritated.   | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | YES | NO | Grape juice is purple.   | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | YES | NO | Jerome tripped on a toy and fell on his back. I know this sounds weird, but I hope he gets a little bump or cut from that, so his parents will see it later, ask him what happened, and hopefully Jerome will tell them everything that happened with his horrible, horrible aunt. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |