



# Critical Reflection Papers

## Overview

A critical reflection paper is a combination of two types of thinking: reflective and critical. The goal of reflective thinking is to try to learn more about ourselves and our work by considering our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The goal of critical thinking is to try to fit an idea in with the ideas, concepts, and theories presented by others. Therefore, critical reflection is about considering our own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and determining how they fit in with the ideas, concepts, and theories that have been presented by others. Often, we are critical in our reflections without realizing it!

Critical reflections are generally their own piece of writing and are mostly found in school settings. For example, you might be asked to critically reflect on a placement experience or your role in a group project. In fields that use a lot of self-reflection, you may also find critical reflection papers in professional writing such as case studies or journal articles.

Some questions to consider:

- Does my experience follow any theory or practice technique I have learned in class? Which ones?
- Am I applying the things I have read to my own experiences?
- How do my experiences compare to my earlier or later experiences? My peers' experiences? My supervisor's experiences?
- Did anything in my experience remind me of something I talked about in class?
- What might theorists in my field think about my actions?
- What would I do differently next time? Why would I do it that way?

Other things to consider in your paper:

- You can often start your paper with an account of your experience. Generally, your professor's guidelines or the length of the paper will dictate how detailed your narrative should be.
- Don't be afraid to use "I"! While a critical reflection is still an academic piece of writing and should have some degree of formality, you are discussing your own experiences, so using the first person and, in many cases, a slightly more relaxed style is fine.
- You can often conclude by setting out goals, next steps, or solutions to a problem.

## How We Can Help

If you are working on a critical reflection paper, you can come into the SLS Writing Support for an individual appointment to get some feedback and guidance on your work at any point in the writing process!

## Resources

[Texas A&M University, Writing Centre Critical Reflection: Journals, Opinions & Reactions](http://ow.ly/vdLd302oReL)  
<http://ow.ly/vdLd302oReL>