

Write a Reflective Letter to the Instructor upon Completing Your Research Journal

Your final research journal assignment asks you to reflect on what you have learned, through class lectures, by participating in class activities, and by completing the major assignments for the course. You will accomplish this by writing me a letter detailing how your understanding of what it means to conduct academic research and write a research essay has evolved since the beginning of the term and by offering me specific evidence (from the assignments and activities that you have completed) concerning your progress in the course. Use the questions and guidelines below to assist you in writing your letter.

Compose your letter on your research blog (or submit a printed copy to me on our last class meeting before finals week). **Your completed letter should be about 500 words.** WordPress keeps a word count, and if you use a word processor, you can use the word-count tool to check the length of your letter. **Please be sure to look at the additional considerations on page three before you begin.**

Guidelines and Questions for Writing Your Reflective Letter:

- **I am your audience for this letter.** Please begin with “Dear Monique” (or, if you must, “Dear Mrs. Babin,”). Also, don’t forget the salutation. If you don’t know what a salutation is, look it up (just google the term “letter salutations”). Anytime is a good time to get acquainted with the conventions of letter writing.
- **Print this assignment** or make some notes. Then, **research journal entries and your assignments** from the course (particularly your various drafts of your research essay). Read over your answers for different activities and assignments. As you look over each week’s activities and assignments, **consider how you will answer the following questions and make some notes.**
- **Of the approaches to conducting academic research that we have studied this term, which practices were the most difficult for you to either understand or to implement? Why? Was there a point in the course where these research concepts suddenly became clearer or more useful? Use specific examples from your research journal or from the various drafts and revision strategies that you have completed to support your observations.**
 - **What do you feel that you still most need to work on** when faced with future situations in which you will need to write well, write authoritatively, or make a point convincingly? Be specific. Provide examples of moments when you were completing your work for this course where you became aware that you needed to work on these specific writing issues?
- **What did you do best? Which ways of the approaches to research, drafting, and revision seemed most natural to you? Why do you think you took to these approaches to research writing more naturally than others? Use specific examples from the various drafts and revision strategies that you have completed to support your observations.**
 - **Which moments in this course most demonstrated your strengths** as a writer?
- What are your **overall impressions of the course and, specifically, the work that you completed for the course**, including small-group in-class activities, research journals, revision strategies, and formal assignments?

- **How have you learned to trust more in your abilities as a writer** to construct and support an effective research thesis?
- **How will you carry the techniques for research writing beyond the boundaries of this course?** Of what use will they be to you as you pursue your current and future academic goals and, perhaps more importantly, in your personal and professional life beyond school?

Additional considerations:

- **You honest reflection and feedback on this assignment will be rewarded, not punished.** I do not want you to worry that providing me with your honest feedback could in any way have a negative effect on your grade. Just as I provided my students honest and constructive feedback on your work all term, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to receive the same kind of feedback from them. If you prefer, you can simply complete the reflective part of the assignment and then send me any constructive criticism that you have to offer via email after you have received your grade. 😊
- This reflective letter provides you an opportunity to discuss your writing, your progress, and what you've learned in this course. This is your opportunity to help me see—from your perspective—what you have put into this course and into your participation in weekly activities assignments.
- Don't simply tell me what I already know—that is, what the assignment required, the mechanics of completing it, or what the assignment was designed to help you learn. I know these things; I wrote the assignments. Tell me about your experience in completing assignments and activities and about what you learned in the process.
- This is not a moment to “kiss up,” to praise my teaching ability, to tell me how wonderful my course was, etc. Of course, I'm happy to hear it if you enjoyed my class or found what you learned here to be particularly enlightening or useful, but what I'm really interested in is an honest description of your experience in this class. This is a moment to show me what you've learned, to show me how you took responsibility for your own learning and your own growth in this class.
- In his article on reflective student writing, Robert T. Kock Jr. states: **“The best letters are those which develop a particular discovery or discoveries through specific examples from moments throughout the course.”** This is what I hope to see from your letters as you reflect on your experiences in the online portions of our course, in our classroom, and with our class assignments. **Show me what you've learned!**

I'm looking forward to reading your letters. Thank you for sharing them with me!