



Purpose of reflective writing

Reflection is always a worthwhile activity, and should be a regular part of your life.

Reflection is...

... a type of critical thinking.

... a way of keeping track of the skills you are learning and the knowledge you acquire, as well as the gaps you are finding in your skills and knowledge.

... a learning process that helps you find connections between topics and between theories.

... a professional tool to help you grow and improve.

... a way to make sense of your own thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes at university you'll be asked to write reflectively to demonstrate what you've learned about a topic, or you might have to keep a journal during a prac (practicum or practical experience placement), or build a learning portfolio of the skills you're acquiring.

Successful people learn from their mistakes, and reflection helps you do that. Reflection makes you an active learner, in control of your life, your actions, and your emotions.

When can or should you reflect?

- When asked or prompted by assessment
- When something goes wrong
- When something goes right
- When you have a question or a conundrum
- When you encounter something that challenges your assumptions
- After a major life event
- During or after prac placement or a new experience
- After completion of a project e.g. a group work task
- Anytime you feel like it

You don't have to write your reflections down (unless for assessment) but a lot of people find doing so helps. For some reflective prompts, see [Reflective writing Structure](#) (PDF, 152 kB) as well as [Activities to aid reflection](#) (PDF, 97 kB). And if you do have a reflective writing task at uni, look at some information on [Reflective writing Tone](#) (PDF, 60 kB).

We also talk about reflecting on progress in the [Successful Study Skills](#) section of the Library Study Smart website.