**DIRECTIONS: REFLECTIONS ESSAY**

The third body of evidence to complete in order to receive credit for an online course is the Reflections Essay. You will use MS Word as your word processor and write the reflection using Standard American English creating **five 5-7 sentence paragraphs**. Submit the paper via email along with the Reflections Essay Rubric (included and completed in your document) to your proctor after applying the MS Word Spelling & Grammar checker.

This set of directions models the appropriate format for submission. The **header** contains ***your name***, the ***date of submission***, and your ***course title (Algebra 1 (S2)***. There is a title for the essay. Type your document in the **Times New Roman font**, **size 12**, and it is **double-space the lines**. Include **page numbers** in the center of your footer. Append the WVA Reflections Essay Rubric to the end of your Reflection Essay. Be sure you follow the directions on this page.

**Writing Prompt**

**Reflecting on what you have learned in your course, you describe three topics of interest why you found them interesting or useful.**

**Paragraph 1**

Use one or two sentences to introduce your topic. Ask a question relating to your topic. Make an observation about your topic. Anything that lets your reader know what your general topic is. **For** **example:** Were you a student that enjoyed history when you were in school or are all students in your school district required to take certain history courses? What might the topic be of an essay that started like this? Would a reader be ready to continue reading about fire safety after reading this sentence? No! You would expect to read about some kind of history. Next, tell your reader about the class you took. Use one sentence to make your ***thesis statement.*** This is the most important part of the essay. Your thesis statement tells the reader about the topic of your writing.

**For Example** The three topics I enjoyed studying most in World History were about Ancient Egypt, the Mongols, and the Crusades. Your thesis needs to have **3 Prongs.** The three topics I enjoyed studying most in World History were about ancient Egypt (**Prong** **1);** the Mongols (**Prong** **3);** and the Crusades (**Prong 4**) for the descriptions of their cultures and peoples. I found all three topics….

**Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4**

Your next three paragraphs will be about each **prong** of your thesis statement. So in using this example, I will have one paragraph about what I learned about ancient Egypt. I will have one paragraph about what I learned about the Mongols and one paragraph about what I learned about The Crusades. Each paragraph will contain informational details about the cultures and peoples.

Each paragraph will start with a **topic sentence**. The **topic sentence** introduces the reader to what the paragraph’s content. **Examples:**

**The study of Ancient Egypt’s cultural differences from one pharaoh to another was very interesting….**

**The Mongolian Empire had its beginnings in the Far East under the leadership of men who used violence to unite various groups of people over greatly diverse areas….**

**The Crusades had an enormous impact on European life both economically and religiously…**.

After your topic sentence, you need a minimum of four sentences that relate to your topic sentence to make a paragraph and then a transition sentence leading into your next topic.

**Paragraph 5 - The Conclusion**

You must have a topic sentence. Then you must restate your thesis in a new way.

**Example:**

**I really enjoyed the history class I took this term in the online lab. Learning about Ancient Egypt, the Mongols, and the Crusades kept my interest and I enjoyed studying these topics the most for they….**

**REFLECTIONS ESSAY RUBRIC**

Self-evaluation – Highlight the “points line” and criteria in green. Your evaluator will highlight in yellow and email the final evaluation of your Reflection Essay to you. Copy and paste this rubric to the end of your Reflection Essay.

**4 Points:** My writing is clear and does what the prompt asked me. My errors in spelling and punctuation are so few they wouldn’t bother you.

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| **Content and Organization** | **Style** |
| * I used important details and information. | * My word choice is awesome. The words fit the prompt well. |
| * I did not forget or lose the main idea when I added interesting details. | * I tried to use interesting words or descriptions to make pictures in the reader’s mind. |
| * I was careful to organize the ideas logically and effectively. | * My sentences are not all the same. I used different types of sentences. |
| * I made sure all of my details connect to the prompt. | * My essay follows the prescribed format in the directions. |
|  | * It is difficult for the reader to find spelling or grammar errors. I set-up my MS Word Spelling and Grammar checker correctly. |

**3 Points:** My writing is pretty good. I did what the prompt asked of me, but I did not give enough information or details with my answer. I need to add more. I made very few errors in spelling and punctuation.

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| **Content and Organization** | **Style** |
| * I explained my main idea, but I need to add more information. I need to choose additional important details and take out those that aren’t. | * Most of my words go well with the purpose. |
| * Sometimes my writing moves away from the main point or details get in the way of the main point. | * At times I could have chosen better words. |
| * I need to put my story in order. | * My sentences are well written, but I did not try different kinds of sentences. |
| * I need to connect ideas so that they fit well together. | * Most of my paper is neat and easy to read. |
|  | * I may have made mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, but you can still understand what I mean. |

**2 Points:** My writing is not clear enough, and I drifted away from the prompt. I need to use more details and be sure they are accurate. I did not notice the errors I made in spelling and mechanics.

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| **Content and Organization** | **Style** |
| * I need to write more clearly and be sure I keep the purpose in mind. I need to be sure I have told all that I can to make my paper complete. | * I need to use words that are strong and effective. |
| * I may not have included enough details or I may have spent too much time on the details and forgot the purpose. | * My writing is not smooth, and I repeat myself at time. |
| * My writing may seem more like a list than like a paragraph with ideas that go together. | * Sometimes you can’t read my writing, and I need to be more careful about spelling and mechanics. |
| * I need to be sure my writing stays on topic. |  |

**1 Point:** My writing needs to be focused and organized. I need to write more to the prompt and include a lot more details and information. I have too many mistakes in spelling and mechanics.

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| --- | --- |
| **Content and Organization** | **Style** |
| * I have not paid enough attention to what I am supposed to write. | * I need to write so that others can read it. |
| * I need to include a lot more information. | * I need to choose a variety of words and be sure that they are just right. |
| * I need to organize my ideas so that my writing is clear. | * I need to write complete sentences. |
| * I need to make sure my writing is complete and about the topic. | * My mistakes in spelling and mechanics keep my reader from understanding what I meant. |

Credit: The "Kid-Friendly" 4-Point Rubric for Student PDF downloaded from the Colorado Department of Education and modified by Bill “Gramps” Lester (ACSD50 Westminster Virtual Academy)

**Reflections on American History Learning**

During the months that I was completing the American History online course, I learned so many interesting facts, ideas, and concepts as wells as I’ve read a lot of historical stories, and poems. At the beginning of this journey, I was very melancholy and unmotivated to read and do the assignments; and it was extremely difficult to find motivation. Once I got past the first assignments, I got more into it, and I got more pizzazz for completing the tasks ahead. I got a lot out of the reading assignments, and I learned about interesting characters that have influenced American culture to this day. A couple of historical figures that have really stuck out to me were Walt Whitman, Edgar Allen Poe, and Herman Melville. These men have different minds and all have contributed so much to society. Their writings have influenced me greatly.

Walt Whitman is “America’s best poet”, and I agree with this statement. He brought free verse poetry into America. He broke the rules that former poets had set; his writing is unique compared to any other poet in history. One of the things that set him apart from everyone else is the fact that he wrote about personal things that happened in his life. To me, his poems sound lovely, and have a ring of hope, and I can really connect to him. However, I don’t really connect to this next poet, I do have great admiration of his works; this man would be Edgar Allen Poe.

Not the happiest man during the Romantic era, but this man’s poetry has gone down in history, some have been on television shows, and one of his most famous works is now being made into a movie; this man is Edgar Allen Poe. His use of imagination was an escape for him from the world, and that is what allowed him recognition as a poet from the Romantics. He also invented the detective stories we have now today! He was a truly remarkable man, and a wonderful poet. Someone who is similar to Poe is the author of the famous novel Moby Dick.

Herman Melville was a terrific writer and poet. He was influenced William Shakespeare and his prodigious works. Melville didn’t start taking writing to heart until he was 25 of age, but before then he was busy traveling the sea, and visiting other countries. He used many of his adventures to influence his writings. These adventures were inspiration for his classic writing, *Moby Dick*! He was practically the founder for the anti-transcendentalist movement.

I have read works from all kinds of writers, and poets while taking this course. The writers whose works grabbed my interests were Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, and of course Walt Whitman. These men greatly shaped America’s literature into what it is today. After finishing American Literature, I will have a new sense of where and how America has grown as a country, as well as a nation.