Midterm Writing Exam: Self-reflection Essay (20%)

# Presentation rules (-2/50 for each you forget)

* Write in your Cahier Canada
* Your text needs to be double-spaced (skip one line between every line)
* You need to count your words

# What is a self-reflection essay?

Some essays are called “personal essays.” This is when the author tries to use their writing skills to analyze their own life. *Educated* is, in that sense, a good example of a very long personal essay. In this course, we will write a type of personal essay that we will call a “self-reflection” essay where you will use the essay format to engage in a reflection on a possible life improvement plan.

## Famous examples of personal essays

Many famous writers have written essays that are categorized as “personal essays,” where they reflect on private events from their own lives. These essays are not exactly structured like what we are trying to do here, but they do show you what it is like to use the essay format to try to understand your personal life. Please pick one to read:

1. Zora Neale Hurston, ‘How it feels to be colored me.’  
   <https://www.thoughtco.com/how-it-feels-to-be-colored-me-by-zora-neale-hurston-1688772>
2. Mark Twain, ‘Two ways of seeing a river.’  
   <https://www.thoughtco.com/two-ways-of-seeing-a-river-by-mark-twain-1688773>
3. Nora Ephron, ‘A few words about breasts.’  
   <https://genius.com/Nora-ephron-a-few-words-about-breasts-annotated>
4. Sallie Tisdale, ‘We do abortions here.’  
   <https://harpers.org/2015/08/we-do-abortions-here/>

## Task:

Answer this question: How do you want to improve your life? As you answer this question, your essay will explore two specific ways in which you want to do that. (450 words minimum).

Structure: Because this is a college-level course, you will need to follow a specific text format which we see here.

Content: Part of writing for college is the exploration of college-level ideas. Every week in our personal discussions, we read college-level texts and watch college-level videos. You need to make meaningful use of some concepts you have learned, naming the source (the article or video, or the author) and using its content in a substantive, college-level way.

# Structure:

## 1. Introduction:

Start your essay with an intriguing anecdote about yourself that is linked in some way with what your essay will be about. Then, briefly reflect on who you are as a person (your values, goals, qualities, something like that). This should lead us to understand why you want to improve your current life. Finish your introduction with a **thesis statement**. The thesis statement states your main reason for change (the value, goal, or personal quality) and then the two aspects of your life that you will improve (one for the first paragraph and one for the second paragraph).

**Thesis  
statement**

**Last sentence of introduction**

To become the father that I want to be, I will  
improve my work-life balance and become a better saver.

## 2. Body paragraph 1:

Write about a life improvement change that you want to make. The first sentence must be a **topic sentence** that states how a specific plan will help you improve the first aspect of your life.

**Topic  
sentence 1**

**Topic for THIS paragraph**

First, reducing my work hours will help me attain better work-life balance.

### How do develop a body paragraph

Your development paragraph needs three elements for content (in no particular order):

* An explanation of how specifc concepts from the readings and videos led you to want to do this change, with a source. Do not write full summaries of the source or its concepts. *Use* the concepts to analyze your situation.
* Specific anecdotes or events from your life that illustrate your ideas, like past mistakes, current problems, or partial successes.
* Some sort of plan of how you will make the change.   
  Again, these are in no particular order. You organize your paragraph however you want to!

Finish the paragraph with a concluding sentence that summarizes its overall idea.

## 3. Body paragraph 2:

The second paragraph is structured the same way, but it is about a second plan for a second aspect of your life.

**Topic  
sentence 1**

**Topic for THIS paragraph**

Next, controlling my expenses through budgeting will help me build a better financial future.

## 4. Conclusion

In your conclusion, summarize the ideas you expressed in the first paragraph in about 2-3 sentences. Then, summarize the ideas you expressed in the second paragraph in about 2-3 sentences. Then there should be a final section where you reflect on this overall life improvement plan, its significance, or the role you hope it will play in your life. If you can think of a short, final thought as a concluding sentence, that would be great. The “hope” part often works very well for this final thought, though there are other fine options.

# 102 Personal Essay (Midterm)

Name: Group:

# Writing: Arguments based on experiences and sources (paragraph 1)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0-2** | **4** | **6** | **8** | **10** |
| The text does not respond to the instructions: Insufficient use of sources, much too short, etc. | There are ideas based on some anecdotes and sources, though maybe tangentially. | Somewhat developed college-level ideas based on some relevant anecdotes and general concepts from one source. | Developed college-level ideas based on developed relevant anecdotes and a specific concept from at least one source. | Ideas and anecdotes are also particularly detailed or thoughtful, and two sources are used meaningfully, one video and one text. |

# Writing: Arguments based on experiences and sources (paragraph 2)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0-2** | **4** | **6** | **8** | **10** |
| *(Same as above)* | *(Same as above)* | *(Same as above)* | *(Same as above)* | *(Same as above)* |

# Writing: Organization and essay format

| **0-2** | **4** | **6** | **8** | **10** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Work does not follow format requirements. | Unclear purpose; text contains paragraphs and some developed ideas, but parts are incoherent or underdeveloped; unfocused introduction and conclusion. | Somewhat clear purpose; text is overall coherent and contains two coherent development paragraphs; basic introduction and conclusion. | Mostly clear purpose; paragraphs are coherent and distinct; thesis statement and topic sentences; coherent introduction and conclusion. | Clear purpose; ideas are coherent and logically organized; clear thesis statement and topic sentences; effective introduction and conclusion. |

# Writing: Grammar and vocabulary

| **0-2** | **4** | **6** | **8** | **10** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Simple structures are used with many mistakes; somewhat unclear vocabulary. | Simple grammar is generally correct. Intermediate gr. may be absent, wrong or over-used; generic, repetitive or vague, informal vocabulary (guy, big, thing, someone, etc.). | Simple grammar is correct. Intermediate gr. is generally correct: “*he was looking,*” (past prog.), complex sentences, etc.; clear vocabulary with some academic terms. | Text is generally complex, and a variety of intermediate grammar is used correctly. Advanced gr. may be incorrect; clear vocabulary with some academic terms, and informal vocabulary is avoided. | Some advanced grammar is also used correctly, and as needed (“*he had looked*,” “*he would have liked*,” etc.); vocabulary is overall varied, precise and academic. |

# Writing: Language mistakes: 1 mistake per X words (hand-written)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 per 7 **2**  1 per 9 **3** | 1 per 11 **4**  1 per 13 **5** | 1 per 15 **6** | 1 per 21 **7**  1 per 27 **8** | 1 per 34 **9**  1 per 40 **10** |

## Language mistakes, computer-assisted version

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 per 10 **2**  1 per 12 **3** | 1 per 14 **4**  1 per 17 **5** | 1 per 20 **6** | 1 per 27 **7**  1 per 35 **8** | 1 per 42 **9**  1 per 50 **10** |

**Total: \_\_\_\_ / 50**

*Rev Feb 19 2025*