

ACADEMIC REFLECTION GUIDE

In Life on Earth, you will write Academic Reflections. These are short papers in which you analyze experiences and draw conclusions. You will be asked to reflect on different topics, which could include:

- Faculty presentations
- Course readings
- Controversial ideas
- Your experiences in the Life on Earth course
- Your past experiences
- A combination of the topics above.

Describe, Analyze, Conclude: A Model for Academic Reflection*

1. Clearly **describe** your experience and/or summarize the content you have read. Keep this to about 20% of your paper. Keep the following questions in mind as you write:
 - What is the concept, idea, or theory?
 - What did the author or professor say about this idea?
 - What happened in the reading, class, or learning experience?
2. Carefully **analyze** the learning experience (about 40% of your paper). These questions may help guide you:
 - Why were specific aspects of the idea or experience particularly interesting or challenging to you?
 - How does this learning experience tie in with something you have learned in the course or believed in the past? How does it support your previous understandings or conflict with them?
 - Why is the idea or experience complicated, and how does one's understanding depend on different perspectives and backgrounds?
3. Draw specific and relevant **conclusions** (about 40% of your paper). Be sure to consider these questions:
 - What have you learned about the topic and about yourself?
 - What else might you need to find out to better understand the topic or yourself?
 - What questions or new ideas do you have that you would like to explore?
 - How might you incorporate or apply your learning in the future, perhaps in your educational or professional life?

Here are some tips to writing a successful Academic Reflection:

- ✓ Read the prompt carefully to find out what you are being asked to reflect on.
- ✓ Read the rubric carefully to see how you will be graded.
- ✓ Write about 500-600 words. Although you won't be penalized for writing more, try to be concise!
- ✓ Convey a main idea that your professor can trace throughout the reflection.
- ✓ Use paragraphs to organize your paper with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- ✓ Support all your statements with specific evidence, which may include references to class readings or presentations.
- ✓ Follow this reflection model: Describe (20%), Analyze (40%), Conclude (40 %).
- ✓ Maintain a professional, academic tone.
- ✓ Adhere to the standards of professionalism, which means that you should carefully proofread your work and follow MLA 8 formatting guidelines, including a Works Cited page and in-text citations when necessary.
- ✓ Check the Student Guides section in the course Blackboard page for further writing resources.

* "The structure of reflective writing." Monash University, www.monash.edu/rlo/assignment-samples/education/education-reflective-writing/reflective-writing-structure. Accessed Aug. 5, 2018.