

How to Write a Reflection Piece

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Thank you for enrolling for classes in the Therapeutic Writing Institute. Whether you are taking classes for your own personal or professional development, or are enrolled in the Certified Journal Facilitator (CJF) or Certified Journal Therapist (CJT) or Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) training program, we welcome you to this new term.

Most classes in this program have an experiential component. You'll probably be asked to do your own therapeutic writing process in your journal, as part of class assignments. These are variously known as "writes," "wordscapes," "journal entries," "experiences" or perhaps other terms that individual instructors use, but they all essentially reference the same thing: Your engagement at the level of your own written personal process, as guided by your instructor.

After finishing each week's required write, we request that you post to the appropriate class discussion board a **reflection piece** on your writing process. A reflection piece is the **outcome of your observation on the writing process you just engaged in**. For example, what happened as you wrote? What was going on in your body? What surprised you? How did your process writes mirror (or not) what was described in the text or other learning? Did this "work" for you? Did you encounter "aha" moments or insights? What did you teach yourself or discover? You are free to write about anything and everything you might feel or notice, as long as it focuses on *the process itself*.

This way of writing requires of you that you maintain simultaneous perspective. On one level, you are engaged in the actual writing of your own journal entries. On another level, you are observing yourself as you write with a sort of detached curiosity.

Unless instructed otherwise by your teacher, **you will be posting your reflection pieces, not the writes themselves**, on the boards as part of the discussion. Again, unless your teacher invites you to do otherwise, you'll not post your actual journal entries, but rather your reflection on them. In this way you can maintain the confidentiality of your journal disclosure and write without the self-consciousness of an "audience" for your writing. You can also develop vital insight and perspective about your writing as you reflect on it. And we, as a professional training community, can engage in deep discourse and learning while still holding respectful boundaries with and for each other.

So the assignment for each "write" is a two-part one:

- 1) Follow the instructions for the writing assignment
- 2) Then, when you have finished your write, step back from it, read it again, and follow it with a reflection piece, which you will post to the appropriate discussion thread.

Although this protocol is a core component of this program, there are variances for certain classes. If there is such a variance, your instructor will so advise you. Please feel free to contact me, or your instructor, if you have questions about writing or posting reflection pieces. Thanks, and here's to a great term!