**What is a Reflective Essay?**

Reflective writing helps us to think more about ourselves, who we are, and how we have changed. In this type essay the writer examines his or her experiences in life. The writer then writes about those experiences, exploring how they have changed, developed or grown from those experiences.

**Structure of a Reflective Essay**

Reflective essays always have an **introduction**, where the writer shares what the overall focus of the reflection will be. The writer explains the main topic, or about what part of their lives or experiences they will focus on.

The **body** of the reflective essay explains how the writer has changed or what the writer has learned. It also explains what things caused the writer to change. Those writers often share how different experiences led to personal growth.

A strong reflective writer will not only share the change but also give examples as supporting details. For example, if a writer discusses becoming more optimistic in life, then examples should be given of what made this change, such as sharing an incident in which the writer took a positive approach to resolving the incident.

In the **conclusion** of a reflective essay, the writer sums up how he or she has changed or the effect of those changes. The writer also might look ahead or look backward. If looking ahead, the writer shares they think the experiences in the essay will change them in the future. If looking backward, the writer will note how different they were in the past. Often, the writer will compare past and future selves to emphasize the difference.