

Standards: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13

Task: English IH - Legacy Project: Reflective Essay

The Legacy of Slavery Project is over...or is it? Now that you've had some time to digest not only your own research but also the research of your peers. During your research and creation of your own presentations, I imagine some of the effect of the information was lost. My hope is always that watching the presentations helps you to digest some of the reality a little better.

Essentially, our research took us from the Middle Passage all the way to the current. Now it is time to debrief. It is certainly difficult to assimilate a lot of information over a short period of time, so organizing and writing this reflective paper will help you to weave a multitude of single strands into one meaningful tapestry.

Assignment:

William Faulkner, recipient of the Nobel Prize and arguably one of the greater American writers, once remarked, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

I would like you to review the notes you took during group presentations as well as the evidence and ideas you generated within your own group in order to write a personal reflective paper responding to that information and to Faulkner's words. I will give you general guidelines, but you must create a structure that will best deliver your thoughts and reflections.

Length = 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced
Mechanics **will** count.

Reflective Writing

A. What it is not:

1. Exposition - conveying academic information; arguing a position
2. Description – though this can be a starting point
3. Argumentation – at least not a quick evaluative judgment about whether something is good or bad or right or wrong
4. Précis – simple problem solving of any kind

B. What it is:

Reflective writing is a sorting out of bits of knowledge, ideas, feelings; it is an awareness of behavior. It could be seen as a melting pot into which you put a number of thoughts, feelings, other forms of awareness, and perhaps new information. In the process of sorting it out in your head, and representing the "sortings out" on paper, you may either recognize that you have learned something new or that you need to reflect more, with perhaps, further input. Your reflections need to come to some sort of end point even if that end point is a statement of what you need to consider next.

While reflective writing might be a way to clarify your thoughts and feelings about something - some plan, some issue, some concept – it is **NOT** a tidy process because it is not linear and it is not straightforward. When you have to design the reflective process for someone else to read (a teacher, a peer editor etc.), you will have to “straighten up” the writing to some extent; however, a teacher or peer editor cannot expect a single thesis leading to an inevitable conclusion. Reflective writing does **NOT** employ single-track thinking.

Accessing and processing the information:

1. Start with a description that, while not reflective, sets the scene for your reflective piece.
2. What is the issue, event, topic, task, time period that is to be the subject of the reflection?
3. What is the nature of this issue?
4. What is the significance of this issue to you? Why?
5. How do you feel about the issue?
6. What other information do you need (ideas, knowledge, opinions)?
7. If you step back from the issue, does it look different?
8. How do you judge your ability to reflect on this matter?
9. Is your own frame of reference or position changing?
 - What did I know? What did I learn? What do I now know? What can I do with what I know now?
 - What is actually useful? What is interesting and useful? What is simply interesting? What is enjoyable?
 - What did I find confusing? What did I find upsetting? What did I try to avoid examining?
 - With what new ideas have I been confronted? What information conflicts with some of my knowledge, ideas, and feelings? What ideas have challenged my own ideas?
 - What will I need to clarify for myself in the future? What do I want to revisit or look at more closely?
 - Of what am I now unsure? What am I convinced about more than ever?
 - What observations about human nature and the human condition can I make?
 - What have I learned about myself as a human being? As a member of a group? As a thinker? As a presenter?
 - What have I learned about my immediate world? the space beyond my immediate world
 - What connection can I make to *Huck Finn*?

Note: This reflective paper **is not** an evaluation of the project, your group, or any other group. **It is** an examination of the information, an attempt to put it in a meaningful context for your personal use. And, it is an examination of your processing of that information, both in your heart and in your head. (You are what you feel, what you know, and what you do.)

Rubric:

	9/10	7/8	6/5	4-0
Focus on Topic (Content)	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.
Adding Personality (Voice)	The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience. The author has taken the ideas and made them "his own."	The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but there is some lack of ownership of the topic.	The writer relates some of his own knowledge or experience, but it adds nothing to the discussion of the topic.	The writer has not tried to transform the information in a personal way. The ideas and the way they are expressed seem to belong to someone else.
Introduction (Organization)	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper.	The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper, but is not particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction states the main topic, but does not adequately preview the structure of the paper nor is it particularly inviting to the reader.	There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure of the paper.
Sequencing (Organization)	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
Conclusion (Organization)	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that they understand what the writer is "getting at."	The conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is recognizable, but does not tie up several loose ends.	There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.
Support for Topic (Content)	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the storyline is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.