

# Reflective Writing: Phrases

Like any genre of writing, reflective writing has a particular form and flavour. Following are some suggestions for phrases that may be useful, set out in a three-part structure: *Description, Interpretation & Outcome*. Think of it as a choose-your-own-adventure story: select words or phrases to describe or analyse the event or experience. Always check your marking guide for any advice from your lecturer.

## Description (the short bit)

### What happened? What is being examined?

Specific events or experiences are nearly always best described using the *past tense*. When describing an idea, for example a theory or model, it is usually best to use the *present tense*, e.g., 'Social interdependence theory recognises...' (not 'recognised').

## Interpretation (the important bit)

### What is most important / useful / relevant about it?

How can your experience, object, event or ideas be explained in the context of the theory? Consider how similar to, and different from, others' perspectives your experience was.

Phrases to describe and interpret			
For me, the [most]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meaningful</li> <li>significant</li> <li>relevant</li> <li>important</li> <li>useful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aspect(s)</li> <li>element(s)</li> <li>experience(s)</li> <li>issue(s)</li> <li>ideas(s)</li> <li>learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>was/were...</li> <li>arose from...</li> <li>happened when...</li> <li>resulted from...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously,</li> <li>At the time,</li> <li>At first,</li> <li>Initially,</li> <li>Subsequently,</li> <li>Later,</li> </ul>	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thought (did not think)...</li> <li>felt (did not feel)...</li> <li>knew (did not know)...</li> <li>noticed (did not notice)...</li> <li>questioned (did not question)...</li> <li>realised (did not realise)...</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Alternatively,]</li> <li>[Equally,]</li> </ul>	This	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>might be</li> <li>is perhaps</li> <li>could be</li> <li>is probably</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>because of...</li> <li>due to...</li> <li>explained by...</li> <li>related to...</li> </ul>

This	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ is similar to...</li> <li>{ is unlike...</li> </ul>	because...
[Un]Like...	this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ reveals...</li> <li>{ demonstrates...</li> </ul>

## Outcome

**What have I learned from this? What does this mean for my future responses?**

**Phrases to summarise and project**

<p>Having</p> <p>[Additionally,] [Furthermore,] [Most importantly,]</p> <p>I have</p> <p>However, I have not</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>read...</li> <li>experienced...</li> <li>applied...</li> <li>discussed...</li> <li>analysed.</li> <li>learned...</li> </ul> <p>I now</p> <p>I have learned that...</p> <p>significantly } slightly }</p> <p>[sufficiently]</p>	<p>I will now need to...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feel...</li> <li>think...</li> <li>realise...</li> <li>wonder...</li> <li>question...</li> <li>know...</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developed</li> <li>improved</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>my skills in...</li> <li>my understanding of...</li> <li>my knowledge of...</li> <li>my ability to...</li> </ul>				
<p>This means that...</p> <p>This makes me feel...</p>							
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ This understanding</li> <li>{ This skill</li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: none;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ is</li> <li>{ could be</li> <li>{ will be</li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: none;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ essential</li> <li>{ important</li> <li>{ useful</li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: none;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ to me as a learner [because...]</li> <li>{ to me as a practitioner [because...]</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ This understanding</li> <li>{ This skill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ is</li> <li>{ could be</li> <li>{ will be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ essential</li> <li>{ important</li> <li>{ useful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ to me as a learner [because...]</li> <li>{ to me as a practitioner [because...]</li> </ul>
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<p>Because I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{ did not...</li> <li>{ have not yet...</li> <li>{ do not yet know...</li> <li>{ am not yet certain about...</li> <li>{ am not yet confident about...</li> <li>{ do not yet understand...</li> </ul>							
<p>As a next step, I need to...</p>							

**Adapted from:** University of Portsmouth (2015). *Reflective writing: A basic introduction*. Retrieved from [http://www.port.ac.uk/media/contacts-and-departments/student-support-services/ask/downloads/ Reflective-writing---a-basic-intro.pdf](http://www.port.ac.uk/media/contacts-and-departments/student-support-services/ask/downloads/Reflective-writing---a-basic-intro.pdf)