

## GUIDELINES FOR THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

### Overview

A journal is a collection of written reflections on the chapters from your textbook and lecture materials covered in class during the semester. The written reflections should be integrated with observations from related journal articles, media articles, combined with scholarly reflective analyses. All sources cited should be appropriately notated using the APA format. The journal should not be a regurgitation of text material.

Reflective journal entries can provide tangible evidence of mental processes. They make thoughts visible and concrete, providing a way to interact with, elaborate on, and expand one's ideas.

Your journal entries should be reflective and analytical, with personal perspectives on what has been learned. The final product should also be creative in nature. You should keep reflections from each class period as well as some summary reflections. You should also indicate questions you have along with information you want to know. After each segment, you should write a summary that brings together your thinking about the particular sub areas of psychology covered in the segment, while your thinking is still fresh before moving on to another area.

If you opt to submit a journal as a final project, you must also keep an ongoing diary of reflections from each segment included during the offering of that segment. As a final project, you must include journal entries and reflections on, at minimum, 4 areas covered during the semester.

### Common Goals of a Journal

- To encourage regular writing
- To make connections between class material, lectures, and personal observations.
- To raise questions and issues that can fuel classroom discussions and enhance your thinking.
- To generate ideas for future paper topics or topics for psychology discussion forums.
- To provide a forum for inquiry, analysis, and evaluation of ideas.

### Use the following Guidelines

- Write at least one entry after each class with a minimum of one typewritten page (and preferably more).
- Relate what you are learning to what you already know.
- Write regularly.
- Try to make concrete connections between journal entries.
- Link personal reactions to the class material.
- Approach the exercise with the intention of being challenged.
- Present your ideas in a coherent and thought-provoking manner.
- Be creative in your thinking and the presentation and formatting of your journal.

**What the Journal Must Include**

- Responses and reactions to class discussion, class readings and class activities on a topic. For example, what did you learn today and how will you apply that learning in practice?
- Reflections on the concepts and activities in course reading assignments, class discussions, videos, etc.
- Ideas or thoughts gained as a result of interactions with peers in class meetings.
- Questions remaining about a particular topic.
- Examples of further reading on the topic.
- Suggestions for future reading - and why they might be important.
- Ideas you have for further data collection, interpretation and presentation.

At minimum, one journal entry is required for each topical area and chapters covered in this course over the semester. You should have individual journal entries for each class and then prepared the comprehensive summary.

For Psy 201, ten(10) summary entries total are required, including the overview of psychology and reflective summary of the course, with a weekly journal entry for each week of class on a subject or area. For Psy 202, eleven (11) entries total are required, including the overview and reflective summary of 201 & 202. Your weekly journal entries can be included in the appendixes or in the section or area covered with a summary reflection preceding these entries.

Each journal entry should be single spaced with a double space between paragraphs. Journal entries should include no less than one typewritten page on each area but ideally contain 2-4 typewritten pages on each area. For any references cited in the journal, you should also include a reference listing at the end of each section and then again, a complete reference listing at the end of the journal. Journals can also include relevant clippings or attachments pertaining to your discussion and reflections.

**Do Not**

- Ignore the basic rules of grammar and punctuation.
- Write to fill pages; the process is more important than the product.
- Wait until the last minute to make your entries. Try to make them soon after class; and make some notes during class.
- Confuse your journal with a personal diary. Although this is your journal, the main focus should be on class assignments and their connections. Try not to focus too much on your personal feelings, such as whether or not you liked the topic or book or film. Instead concentrate on why your professor assigned the material or why the material is being discussed in your text or class.
- Simply summarize—analyze. Avoid describing what you have read. Ask probing questions: are the points well-argued? Does the writer come to a logical conclusion? What other issues should be considered?

### **Journal as a Final Project**

- Must include a summary reflection of the semester, plus a presentation of 4 areas covered during the semester. Answer the following questions:

- What is the most significant information you learned this semester?
- How did you learn it and why is it so important?
- What was the best experience you had this semester? Why?
- What was most difficult for you? Why?
- What are your top three strengths accomplished this semester, in terms of course goals?
- What are your top two goals for future improvement?

***Take your journal seriously!***

***Keeping a journal helps develop writing, reading, analytical and critical skills necessary in all disciplines.***

## GRADING CRITERIA FOR REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Psychology Course, Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Organization and Clarity (30 Points)

- Well Written
- Carefully Organized & Formatted
- Neatly Presented
- Includes a heading for each entry
- Includes dated entries
- Provided a brief list of events/material covered during class

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

### Reflective Thought (50 Points)

- Evidence of in-depth reflective thinking
- Presents ideas in coherent and logical manner
- Relates learning to previous understanding
- Reflective thought but ideas not carried through
- No evidence of reflective thought
- Clear evidence about what is learned
- Makes connections between class material, lectures, discussions and text
- Raises critical questions
- Includes exploration of other research and information
- Clear evidence of learning

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

### Technical Aspects (10 Points)

- Typewritten
- Carefully Proofed
- Correct Grammar
- No typographical errors
- Appropriate length
- Includes reference listing

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

### Overall (10 Points)

- Completeness of the Journal
- Displays creative & productive thinking
- Clear evidence of learning overall
- Connection of Theory to Application

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Total** \_\_\_\_\_