

Academic & Reflective Writing Styles

Academic writing and reflective writing have different purposes. The purpose of academic writing is to share ideas, theories, and information in the academic world. This means most of the information in academic writing is from experiments or research, in which either you have orchestrated the experiment, gathered the data, and made a theory to share, or you have gone out and done the research by means of books, journals, videos, or other academic mediums, and have shared the information you have gathered from other academics. Because your academic writing is focused on topics that are independent of yourself, it is considered inappropriate to include personal comments in the writing.

Reflective writing, or which is sometimes referred to as journaling, focuses on yourself. Rather than going out and researching the topic of your academic paper, you are going inwards and researching your own thoughts, actions, and feelings. This means that while it is considered inappropriate to include your personal opinion in academic writing, it is perfectly acceptable and encouraged to use “I” focused language when reflecting.

Core Elements of Academic Writing:

Argument: what is the main idea/topic that you are going to prove/claim?

Main points: what evidence will you use to prove your argument?

Counter-argument: (optional) an alternate theory/opinion contrary to your argument.

Core Elements of Reflective Writing:

Thoughts/Feelings/Actions: what is the main idea/topic that you are reflecting on?

Evidence/Support: what is an example of you displaying/demonstrating what you are reflecting on?

Ways to improve: (optional) what are some ways to improve what you identify as areas that could use development?

Academic Writing	Reflective Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written in 3rd person POV (“They,” “the,” “Many,” etc.) - Focuses on ideas/theories/information - May require multiple sources to provide adequate support - Requires citations for information from other credible, academic sources - Requires researched facts/theories to provide support to main ideas/claims - Focuses on counter-arguments or recommendations as optional elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written in 1st person POV (“I,” “you,” “we,” etc.) - Focuses on self (thoughts/feelings/actions) - Does not require multiple sources to provide adequate support - Does not require a citation for information provided by you - Requires examples of own life to provide support to main ideas/claims - Focuses on ways to improve oneself as optional elements

