

Introductory Reflective Essay Prompt

The Introductory Reflective Essay (IRE) should have a thesis and should analyze and synthesize the elements of your portfolio.

Essentially, this means that you'll be writing a clear, concise, thesis-driven essay that introduces and describes your portfolio, makes an appropriately narrow central claim, and draws conclusions about your writing in this class. Plan to write more and edit it down to your very best 750-1500 words.

1. Your first step in writing this IRE is to brainstorm, free write, or journal to search for a theme. You might try this:

What are the most important or interesting or helpful or distinctive things I've learned or confirmed about my writing by participating in this course?

2. Next, answer this question:

What have I written this semester that demonstrates that theme?

Your answer to the first question will provide the foundation of your thesis claim, while your answer to the second question will direct you to the evidence you'll need to support your claim. The other documents you've included in the ePortfolio will provide the evidence for your IRE's thesis.

Here are some other **possible** topics you might want to address as you are brainstorming for ideas to develop in your IRE:

- Reflect on a particular strength or weakness as a writer in any part of the writing and composing process. Use portions of your portfolio exhibits and other documents to provide supporting evidence/examples.
- Reflect on your strengths and weakness as a writer in any area of the craft itself (the FYC Grading Rubric elements: unity, evidence, presentation, coherence, audience awareness, imagination, etc.).
- Comment on the most interesting, most difficult, or the most surprising things you learned about yourself as a writer.
- Describe what is difficult for you and/or what is easy for you about the writing process.
- Describe how the different skills used in reading, researching, drafting, editing, composing, organizing, analyzing, documenting, proofreading, and writing in this course (as demonstrated in your portfolio) contribute to your ability to perform well in other courses or activities. Consider your development in skills such as analysis, critical thinking. Can you recognize claims and evidence, poor logic, rhetorical appeals?
- Show how your portfolio items contribute towards meeting the stated goals of this course.

Approaches you should probably avoid:

- Writing one paragraph summarizing each item in your portfolio, with nothing else to unite them.
- Making lots of good/bad evaluative claims about your writing with very few or no supporting examples (for instance: "When I began this class, I was a terrible writer, but due to perseverance and willpower I am now a great writer." "My first paper was bad at first, but I worked hard, and now it's much better" etc.)
- Not writing about the items in your portfolio.
- Writing a narrative about the class in general.

You may want to refer to portions of the FYW Grading Rubric and the *FYW Guide*.