

*Adapted from UVM Writing Center

<http://www.uvm.edu/wid/writingcenter/tutortips/psychreflection.html>

Writing a Reflection for Psychology

A Reflection paper can take a variety of forms; in general, students are asked to apply personal experiences and analysis of course-related material in order to enrich their understanding of course topics. Sometimes students are asked to complete a series of Reflection Papers that comprise, for example, a “Journal” in which students record experiences and reactions to or analysis of those experiences in light of course material.

Another permutation is a “Research Journal” in which students regularly record research ideas and related brainstorming.

TIPS:

- The bulk of the essay should address the application of the theory and include several examples that support how it manifests in reality.
- The requirements for any informal writing assignment are likely to vary depending on the professor and class.
- Reference the assignment to make sure your writing is meeting the expectations.

Here is a small excerpt from a student's reflection paper analyzing media for Developmental Psychology:

Helga Pataki is a fourth grade Caucasian girl from the children's television series Hey Arnold! Helga displays many acts of aggression throughout the Hey Arnold! series .. Helga's family directly affects her aggressive behavior. Helga's father, Bob, displays authoritarian parenting. Authoritarian parenting is a parenting style that is low in responsiveness to the child, but high in demandingness (Siegler et al., 2010). Children of authoritarian parents are typically low in social and academic competence, unfriendly, and experience negative events as school (Siegler et al., 2010). Helga matches this description. Helga is very unfriendly as seen in almost all episodes; she does not know how to act pro-socially based off of her interactions with peers, and she has failed a math test in Quantity Time (1997) showing negative school events. Helga's mother, Merriam, displays rejecting-neglecting parenting. Rejecting-neglecting is a parenting style that is low in responsiveness and demandingness (Siegler et al., 2010). In The Beeper Queen (1999), Merriam gets a job selling beepers and gets to be in a television commercial. She gradually begins to ignore Helga completely and when Helga asks for help, Merriam says that the people at work need her more and whatever Helga's problems were they could wait. Children of rejecting-neglecting parents tend to show antisocial behavior, low academic competence and depression (Siegler et al., 2010). Helga shows signs of all of these attributes.