

# ***Fitz's Narrative Reflection Paragraph Rubric***

## *How to Write a One -Paragraph Reflection in Ten Steps*

*The mind is not a vessel to be filled,  
but a fire to be kindled.*

— Plutarch

A Reflection explores a question. An Essay answers it.

The difference between a reflective paragraph and a narrative paragraph is that a reflection focuses primarily on a theme or train of thought, while any supporting experience is secondary; whereas, a narrative focuses mainly on the experience with a theme or themes emerging organically out of the experience.

- Read the left hand column carefully and try to follow all of the steps of the rubric.
- Read each section out loud and proofread carefully.
- A reflection should recreate the way you think in a natural sounding and unaffected way by using language you would use when speaking.
- It takes a good ninety minutes to write a decent paragraph, so plan accordingly.

<p><b>1) ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Include your name, class name, assignment title, and date in the top right corner.</li></ul>	<p>John Fitzsimmons Fitz English Reflection Paragraph December 6, 2013</p>
<p><b>2) ONE WORD THEME:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Writing out your theme as a single word is a good way to help keep focused as you write the paragraph.</li><li>● Put your one word theme as size 18 Font centered on the page.</li></ul>	<p>Family</p>

**3) GUIDING QUOTE:**

- If you are only writing a single paragraph, it is a good idea to put a quote above the paragraph that captures the mood, tone, and theme of your paragraph.

**For example:** if I wish to write about the power of family, I could use a quote like this: (put in italics, with the author's name below the quote).

*Home is where when you get there,  
they have to let you in.*  
~Robert Frost

**4) BROAD THEME**

- Write a short declarative statement, question, or philosophical speculation that touches on a broad theme that all of us can relate to in some way or other.
- This acts as a "hook" that will attract your reader's attention. Despite what you might wish, no one really cares about you when they read; a reader cares primarily about himself or herself.
- This broad theme is a theme that any person can relate to on some level, and hopefully it is intriguing enough to make your reader want to read on.

**For example:** if you wish to write about the "importance of family," here is an example of a broad and universal theme:

*It is only our immediate family that gives us unconditional love.*

**5) NARROW THEME:**

- Narrow down your theme by writing a phrase or sentence using the theme word that captures how your chosen theme is used in a specific way in the experience you are going to write about.
- Make sure it is "clear, concise and memorable" because this is what you want your readers to remember "as" they read your paragraph.
- This is the sentence that "steers" your reader in the direction you want your paragraph to go, and in that sense, it is what your paragraph is going to be about.

**For example:**

*It is our family that we turn to when there is no place left to go.*

## 6) ONE/TWO PUNCH:

- Follow your topic sentence with one or two more sentences that add detail or explanation to your topic sentence.
- These sentences can (and maybe should) be longer sentences.
- This helps to “narrow down” the focus of your paragraph so that you only have to write about what can be fully explained in one paragraph.

### For example:

*When we are alone in the world; when nothing is going our way, we know that the door of family will always open for us and welcome us back into the arms of those people who love us with unconditional love.*

**NOTE: Now your reader is pretty confident that you are going to write about being welcomed back home by the people who love you--which is a much more focused theme than your broad theme.**

## 7) SMOKING GUN:

- When writing about how you think and feel about something, it is usually a good idea to wed those thoughts with some kind of actual experience.
- It “proves” that what you think exists in the real world—and not simply in your imagination.
- When writing about a personal experience, chose a specific personal experience (or even a smaller part of an experience) that explicates, illustrates, and amplifies the theme of your paragraph.
- This personal experience is proof that you have been there and done that, which is why we call it the smoking gun! It is evidence that you are the one who had the experience that only YOU can write about with full authority.
- When you write the smoking gun, be sure to include as much detail as needed—the who? what? when? where? and why?—to fully capture the theme of your paragraph.

### For example:

*At no other time in my life was this more obvious than when I returned to my family home in Concord after a long journey to China, Mongolia and Russia. It was a hobo odyssey meant to discover the essential truth about life--a truth I never discovered, though I later found a more important truth. Broke, disheveled, and disenchanting, I stood on the doorstep and tentatively rapped on the door of 38 Longfellow Road. As the door swung open, no smile was wider than my mom's; no arms were wider than my dad's as they pulled me into their arms and back into the living room I left so many months ago.*

### 8) HEAD & HEART:

- In the head and heart you want to explore, explain, and explicate how your theme is important to the thoughts and/or experience you introduced.
- This is where you reflect upon your experience and describe the ways that this experience has impacted and affected your life.
- Write as many more sentences as you "need" (but at least three more) to illustrate and elaborate upon whatever you introduced in your theme-setting sentences.
- The head and heart is an excellent place to use outside source insertion quotes that help to bolster your theme. Be sure to cite your source.
- This is also the best place to expand the length of your paragraph—if needed!

### For example:

*It didn't matter that I left home without even telling them where I was going. It didn't matter that I had once criticized their lives as dull and meaningless, and it didn't matter that I never called and never wrote. It only mattered that I was home again, for "home is where when you get there/ they have to let you in." (Robert Frost)*

**NOTE: Notice that I use a writing technique called parallelism [highlighted in brown] to help tie my thoughts together and add a poetic power and rhythm to my writing.**

### 9) GET ON or GET OUT!

- This is your concluding sentence that either wants to close out your thoughts or "transition" to a new paragraph.
- If it is a single paragraph, be sure to include references to your one-word theme in a compelling, universal, and interesting way.

### For example:

*For me, it only matters that I will never turn my back on my family again because when times are tough, family is all that really matters.*

## 10) EDIT, REVISE, & PROOFREAD

- Spend at least ten minutes editing and revising.
- Be certain that every punctuation mark is supported by one of the rules.
- Double check every word that is a possible homophone.
- Be sure that every sentence is as clear, concise, and compelling as possible and is true to the intent of each step of this rubric.

Paste your completed paragraph in the box below. Read it through, recite it, and make any revisions you feel are needed to make this feel like your natural and thoughtful voice. Turn in this assignment as required.

John Fitzsimmons  
Fitz English  
Reflection Paragraph  
December 6, 2013

## Family

*Home is where when you get there,  
they have to let you in.*  
~Robert Frost

It is only our immediate family that gives us unconditional love. It is our family that we turn to when there is no place left to go. When we are alone in the world; when nothing is going our way, we know that the door of family will always open for us and welcome us back into the arms of those people who love us with unconditional love. At no other time in my life was this more obvious than when I returned to my family home in Concord after a long journey to China, Mongolia and Russia. It was a hobo odyssey meant to discover the essential truth about life--a truth I never discovered, though I later found a more important truth. Broke, disheveled, and disenchanted, I stood on the doorstep and tentatively rapped on the door of 38 Longfellow Road. As the door swung open, no smile was wider than my mom's, and no arms were wider than my dad's as they pulled me into their arms and back into the living room I left so many months ago. It didn't matter that I left home without even telling them where I was going. It didn't matter that I had once criticized their lives as dull and meaningless, and it didn't matter that I never called and never wrote. It only mattered that I was home again, for "home is where when you get there/ they have to let you in." (Robert Frost) For me, it only matters that I will never turn my back on my family again because when times are tough, family is all that really matters.

**Metacognition:**

Write a few sentences that reflect your thoughts on writing this paragraph: what was hard, what was rewarding, and what helped you create this paragraph--and anything else that is spinning through your head related to this assignment.