

## Notebook Check(s)

(Participation Grade – Ongoing Assignment Done Multiple Times In Class)

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Your participation grades from now on will largely come in the form of “Notebook Checks” – small reflective essays that you will turn in every so often about your participation in class. In these essays, you will highlight pieces of work that you’ve done for class, identify the page numbers that work is on in your notebook, and reflect on how well (or not well) they helped you understand and learn the course material (more info below). In addition to your essay itself, I will also ask you to turn in your actual notebook alongside your essay, so I can look at the work you’ve been doing in class for myself.

In these essays, you will choose three (3) of the following options to reflect on in a typed essay:

- One (1) in-class activity or notes you took in class that helped you understand the lesson better. Explain why this class activity or set of notes helped you.
- One (1) in class activity or in-class notes that **did not** help you understand the lesson better. Explain why this activity or set of notes was not helpful to you.
- One (1) piece of homework or notes that helped you understand the course readings better. Explain why these notes really helped you.
- One (1) piece of homework or notes that **did not** help you understand the course readings better. Explain why these notes did not help you.
- One (1) entry of any kind in your notebook (activity, notes or homework) that you think you did a good job on. What was the entry, and why do you think you did well on it?
- One (1) entry of any kind in your notebook (activity, notes or homework) that you struggled with. Reflect on this entry and explain why you feel you struggled with it

Your reflection should be typed, double-spaced, in MLA format, and should be 2½ pages maximum, and will be turned in along with your notebook. Because this is an informal reflection, you do not need to have an introduction and a conclusion with a thesis statement. You should, however, still write in paragraph form and write with formal, classroom-appropriate language. Additionally, you may not use the same entry for multiple examples of the above choices.

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### “How Do I Write a Good Reflection To Get A Good Grade?”

Here is an example of a weak reflective paragraph:

One assignment that I think I did well on was an activity we did last Thursday. In this activity, we had to answer some questions about the reading we did. At first I didn't really understand what we were doing, but by the end of the assignment I really understood the classroom material. Overall, I'm really proud of the work I did, and think I did awesome on the assignment.

This is a weak reflective paragraph because it isn't very specific, and doesn't include lots of detail about WHY this student felt that their assignment helped them understand the class material.

Below is an example of a **stronger reflective paragraph**:

One assignment that I think I did a good job on was the questions that we answered about "Why I Hate Mothers Day" by Anne Lamott on September 18th (Page 22). In these questions, the class talked about whether or not we agreed with Lamott's ideas about Mother's Day, which I definitely did not. I really liked what I wrote, because even though I didn't agree with Lamott's ideas whatsoever, I think I did a good job explaining my thought process, especially when I used direct quotes from Lamott's work to illustrate my points. I'm glad I had this written down, too, because when I saw questions on our unit test about this story, I remembered what I wrote, so I feel like this entry also helped me get a good grade on my test. So, overall, I think I did especially well on this class activity.

This is a stronger reflective paragraph because it includes specific details about why an entry in the notebook helped this student. Additionally, this paragraph also mentions concrete details about the entry itself.

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### Grading Rubric

#### Assignment Appropriateness

\_\_\_\_\_ / 4

*Your reflection follows all directions accurately: you meet the length requirement of the assignment, you include page numbers in your reflection, and you turn in your notebook along with the reflective essay.*

#### Strength of Reflection

\_\_\_\_\_ / 4

*Your writing demonstrates a high level of reflective awareness. Your insights into your classwork are specific and unique to your experience in class. You avoid writing about your work in generalities, and you reflect on your participation in class in direct, concrete ways.*

#### Strength of Highlighted Entries

\_\_\_\_\_ / 4

*The entries in your notebook that you choose to highlight demonstrate good quality work in class, and evidence of your full participation in your classwork. Additionally, the entries not highlighted in your reflection are of a similar quality as your highlighted ones.*

#### Organization & Flow of Ideas

\_\_\_\_\_ / 4

*Your reflection is overall well organized and easy to understand. It is written in paragraph form in complete sentences, and your writing employs a variety of sentence structures. If your organization does confuse the reader, it is brief and easily forgiven.*

#### Grammar & Formatting

\_\_\_\_\_ / 4

*If there are grammar mistakes, they are minor and easily forgotten, as they do not impede the overall meaning of the reflection.*

#### Total Points

\_\_\_\_\_ / 20  
\_\_\_\_\_ % / 100%