

REFLECTIVE WRITING - SOME TECHNIQUES

Here are some tips on how to ensure a piece of writing has a strong reflective element. The hypothetical exemplar is based on a climbing accident.

1. Structure your sections/paragraphs around a *reflective aspect of the experience*, so that each section becomes a **combination of description and reflection**: both are essential.

Eg: a) What the attraction of rock-climbing is – reflect on this while starting the climb

b) Making crucial decisions – reflect on this while describing the first phase of the climb

c) Feeling powerless – reflect on this while describing the approach to the fall and the fall itself.

d) How the incident changed me – reflect on this while describing the aftermath of the fall.

NOTICE: Each section/body paragraph is a combination of retelling the event AND reflection. Your paragraph plan should state what part of the event you will discuss AND what you will be reflecting on.

2. Generalise: i.e. put your experience in the context of all or most people's experience. This means, allow EVERYBODY to relate to your experience.

Eg: "Most people need a strong element of excitement in their lives. Some people take drugs, others get a high out of rock concerts, some are hooked on fast cars or bikes. For me it was rock climbing."

3. Stand back and see the situation from now.

Eg: "When you have to make crucial decisions so much depends on what you have to lose. From my perspective now, as a parent, there is no doubt in my mind what decision I would make. But then things were different."

4. Stand back and see it from the perspective of others.

Eg: "From where Liz and John were, I must have looked in complete control. They could not have seen the imperceptible tremor in my heel, or the thoughts racing through my mind. Panic can be like that."

5. Compare with the experience of others.

Eg: "I'd read one account of a fall where all that could be recalled was the letting go and the attempt to get up afterwards. I, too, can remember nothing about the freefall in the middle."

6. Contrast with what might have been.

Eg: "The runner held. It was days before I could bring myself to think of what would have happened if it hadn't."

7. Bring in knowledge from research (eg accident statistics, etc)

8. Bring in references to novels, films, tv soaps, songs, etc.

Eg: "What seems impossible for films such as *The Eiger Sanction* to communicate is the sense of exposure, that sense of being above the void."