**Reflective Essay**

What is a reflective essay? It recalls and reimagines a vignette the writer experienced, and shows how the writer grew from this experience. Reflective Essays can be the most enjoyable to read because they are so personal and meaningful. They can also be the most difficult to write, because they demand that the writer put all his thoughts and feelings on paper for someone else to read. If done right, a reflective essay will resonate with the reader because it hits some universal chord.

***One way to approach this type of essay is though a typical outline:***

# Introduction

A. Attention Getter

B. Necessary information: what is the event we’ll be hearing about?

C. Thesis statement: what was the take-away from this event? How did it change you?

# Body

## The vignette: Describe the experience in great detail. Take the reader back into the moment and use imagery to repaint it as vividly as possible. This may take several paragraphs. Use dialogue if it’s appropriate. This is the most fun part.

## Its effects on you and/or other people: How did it affect you? What emotions or thoughts went through your head? What words did people around you say?

## What you learned from it: How has this vignette change you? It may not be a physical change or even a change in action. But, it is a change in the way you view or think about something. Sometimes these changes are the most shattering of all.

# Conclusion: Tie up the loose ends. Sometimes this involves turning the topic back at the reader and suggesting a take-away for him/her, too. Other times it just means leaving the reader with a last thought. It is not like a TIQA essay in that there is no “evidence” to review.

***Sometimes, however, your experience can be told in a less linear fashion, and flits back and forth between experiences and times. This is much harder to do, but it can be very effective. In this case the outline gets much murkier, but there is still a beginning, middle and end. All of the components of the above outline are present, but not necessarily in this order.***