

Reflective Writing Sample 1

My name is XXXX and I am from Bangladesh. When I applied for an university course, I was enrolled in an English course. I had a score of 7.0 in my IELTS but it expired a day before I applied. Having a good score always made me confident to possess a good grip on English usage in my writing and speaking. But I had surprises waiting for me.

I had no idea how complex could academic English be. I wrote summaries and essays before, but until the time I started my course, I started to see the things I was lacking and almost knew nothing about them. In the first week of the first term, everything seemed to be very easy. It was regarding the reading section which included making arguments and discussions about a topic. This was mainly focused to test my skills which I already had. I got along well with it. It was from the second week I started to learn something new. In the second week we were taught about the importance of note taking and the ways of taking them. Highlighting the key points and diagrammatic note taking was the most preferred methods. I personally like the diagrammatic note taking method. This is because, diagrams allow me to have a clear view of what I really want to focus on from the text I am reading. It also allows spaces to link the ideas by making separate boxes and showing the link by drawing arrows across them. On the other hand, bulleted note taking had the drawback of not letting something added extra when the complete note taking was already done. I was always made aware of plagiarism by my tutor, which is a serious academic offence. To avoid it, I learnt the method paraphrasing and referencing. I had niche idea on how these were done but I was learning it gradually.

As I said earlier, I was familiar to making summaries but paraphrasing was something which was a completely new dimension in academic writing for me. I learnt how to use the notes to make summaries of the text. It was surprisingly easier when I used the diagrammatic notes to write something in my own words. I was very happy to learn to use such a method as I always had a problem of making an introduction of any academic writing. The notes provided me a clear idea of what I should focus in my writing. . Before I started the course, I had no idea what a reference could be and in what circumstances should it be used. But, my tutor explained the shocking consequences of getting a 'zero' mark without references. I have now learnt the various methods of referencing, which is different for journals, articles, online articles, newspapers and other sources. The referencing section of the syllabus was quite a large one and it took two weeks to complete it in Term 1. In the latter weeks after completing the 'referencing' part we moved on into Academic Writing section. I learnt the different structure of writing essays, paragraphs and journals. To combine the different sources together and write about a single topic,

focusing on the important points was very interesting. This really helped to debate on various arguments and come to a conclusion. We were then tested what we have learnt through some class activities and I would say I learnt everything new and helpful. The last week of the first term focused on the research skills. This taught us the ways of incorporating sources and making legitimate points out of them.

The second term of the program had a deeper look inside the academic reading and writing. The definition of academic English completely changed for me when I started the course. The first week's lesson was focused on academic writing. It consisted of how to make an introduction and conclusion. It really helped me as I lacked the knowledge of writing introduction and making an end to an essay was harder. I also learnt to use reference words, that is, pronouns. It helped me to make my essays and paragraphs more interesting to read. Linking words was another addition to my achievement. For me, these were like decorative tools I could use to make my writings more interesting for the reader. Learning to make essay plan was another achievement for me I would say. This helped me to constantly focus on what I am supposed to write. Most often I had a tendency of deflecting away from what I was meant to write but with the essay plan I completely know what I am doing. I was taught during the second week's lesson on how to make arguments and counter arguments. Providing evidence for the arguments made was a also part of the lesson. Referencing lessons were still continued in the second term as well as this was very important regarding the plagiarism issue. I learnt the use of quotations and citations. It was interesting to know that a single inverted comma makes a big difference when used inappropriately. The use of cautious language was another important part of the lesson. Because, I often confused myself with the appropriate words I should be using while writing essays and giving examples was another important part of the lesson.

The lesson plan was designed in a way that taught me everything I already knew but in a new meaningful dimension. What I understood from the Term 1 and Term 2 has made me more able to make my points clear through my essays and paragraphs. I have also learnt to combine the knowledge I have acquired to make my writings more meaningful which would let me achieve better grades than before. My tutor conducted vigorous activities and exercises to make us more habituated with the academic writing strategy and it has been a successful journey for me.