

Reflective Essay Template (Fill-in-the-Blank)

Here's a ready-to-use structure you can adapt:

Introduction Template

[HOOK: Open with a vivid moment, question, or striking detail]

[CONTEXT: 1 to 2 sentences setting up when/where/why this happened]

[THESIS: What's the main insight this experience taught you?]

Example: "The email started with 'We regret to inform you.' I'd been rejected from my dream college, and I felt like I'd failed at the one thing that was supposed to define me. That rejection taught me that disappointment isn't failure, it's redirection. What seemed like the end of my plans became the beginning of discovering what I actually wanted, not what I thought I was supposed to want."

Body Paragraph Template (Repeat 3 to 5x)

[TOPIC SENTENCE: What aspect of the experience is this paragraph about?]

[DESCRIBE: What happened? Include specific details, dialogue, actions]

[REFLECT: What were you thinking/feeling during this?]

[ANALYZE: What did this teach you? How did it change your thinking?]

[CONNECT: How does this tie to your thesis?]

Conclusion Template

[RESTATE INSIGHT: Rephrase your main thesis in fresh language]

[SUMMARIZE GROWTH: Briefly recap how you've changed]

[LOOK FORWARD: How will this affect your future decisions/behavior?]

Example: "That rejection email didn't close doors; it revealed that I'd been walking toward the wrong ones. The year I spent at my 'backup' school taught me more about myself than prestige ever could. Now, when plans fall apart, I pause before mourning them. Sometimes what looks like failure is actually freedom to find a better path."

