South Eugene High School • SENIOR PROJECT
REFLECTIVE ESSAY GUIDANCE

1. From Packet #3 “Portfolio Requirements” page

**ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS**  * Format: - typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font
- name and date at the top

Rough draft due week of _________________________________ (fill in date)
Final draft due in Portfolio  800-1000 words

**INTRODUCTION:**  - Where were you and
  - Why did you select this topic and what did you want to learn?
    - State your Focus Question.

**BODY:**  - Identify your community advisor. Explain this person’s role and area of expertise,
    and how they supported you in your overall experience.
    - Describe your community experience in several paragraphs that address some of the
      aspects of the function or operation of your place. You should talk about what you
      did in detail.
      Incorporate information you included in your journal.
    - Describe the new knowledge or skills you gained. Include details from your experience
      that were most helpful.
    - Evaluate and compare how your initial research either aligned with or differed from what
      you experienced.

**CONCLUSION:**  - Provide an answer to your Focus Question.
  - Address the relevance of your project in relation to your future Plan or Goals.

2. The scoring sheet evaluators will use.

Reflective Essay Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTS of the ESSAY</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Statement of Focus Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction: Reasons for selecting topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body: Identify Community Advisor</td>
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<td>Body: Describe experience in detail (2-3 paragraphs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body: Describe new knowledge and/or skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Answer to focus question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Relevance of the project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventions: Spelling and grammar; structure</td>
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</tbody>
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3. The rubric for the Reflection Essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFLECTION ESSAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student thoroughly reflects on their learning as a result of this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong control of writing conventions (spelling, grammar, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors are few and minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student reflects on their learning as a result of this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reader can identify areas of the student’s self-discovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor errors do not impede readability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs Further Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student needs to offer more detail and/or edit work to provide the reader with a clear understanding of learning as a result of this project.</td>
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</tbody>
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4. Several examples...
Reflective Essay

For my senior project I decided to take a more in depth look at a topic of interest to me- child behavior and development. I selected this topic because I already had some background in it, I work as a preschool teacher's assistant over the summer, and I really wanted to learn more about how to help children learn proper and healthy behavior. After a discussion with my mentor, we decided that I would create a video on how to properly use their behavioral management system, which lead to my focus question: How can I combine my interest in child development and behavior to help create a video teaching aid showing preschool teachers how to effectively use a pyramidal behavioral management system?

I decided to mentor with Diane Schultz, a local preschool director. She works at Parkside Community Preschool which provides service to children ages 11 months to six years. She has been a teacher and director for 23 years. I actually went to Parkside as a child, so this had a little bit of sentimental value to me.

For the majority of this project I spent direct time in the preschool classroom setting. I mainly worked in the Pre-K classroom, a room focused at getting kids prepared for kindergarten, with children ages 4 to 6. I spent part of my time simply observing how the classroom ran. It was very interesting to be able to step back and watch how the teachers interacted with the children and visa versa. I was able to see which techniques the kids responded positively to, as well as what seemed to invoke a negative reaction.

A lot of my time was also spent interacting with the kids, being able to see how they responded to me. In the classroom we used a card system to help kids with behavioral management problems, it was a great challenge for me to try and effectively
use this. That was a great learning experience for both me and the kids. I enjoyed being a positive influence in someone’s life; the kids seemed to grow to me being there and were more than happy to let me help with an art project or read them a book. It was a very rewarding feeling.

The remaining part of my time was spent video taping some of the interactions and happenings in the classroom in order to make my video to teach other teachers how to use the card system. This was rather challenging as I soon felt like I had to be in twenty places at once. Putting together the video took some time, but I was really proud of the end result. I was able to effectively put together a positive teaching aid that will hopefully benefit both children and staff.

I learned more details about how to deal with children who act out or experience break-downs. The basic skills that I learned and used can be applied to any stressful situation. I feel much more knowledgeable about why kids often act up, as well as better prepared to help in situations that arise.

To answer my focus question, after experiencing in-depth time in the classroom I was able to take the knowledge that I gained from that time and transfer the proper techniques into a video teaching aid. I plan to continue into a field that requires a lot of people time, and this experience gave me exposure to dealing with both children and adults. Overall, I would say that I gained from this project and it was worthwhile experience.
SENIOR PROJECT – REFLECTIVE ESSAY

I did not ever imagine myself as a photographer. I did not understand the technical aspects of cameras. When this project came up, I had no idea about what I was going to do. Then I met Dan Morrison.

Dan Morrison is a photojournalist. He worked for “National Geographic” for twenty-five years, has worked with “Outside” magazine; he helped CNN get off the ground, to some others as well. Dan has traveled the world. He climbed Mt. Everest, escaped being consumed by cannibals, dodged being trampled by elephants, took pictures of war zones, and Adventure sport races. Dan was my mentor.

I met Dan when I picked up my younger brother, he was hanging out with Dan’s youngest son. When I met him, I described the Senior project to Dan and his fascinating wife Deborah. He asked me to help him out with a project. His oldest son, Alex, plays for the South Eugene High school football team. Dan has been taking pictures and filming the games. The photographs are sent to a man named Tim Odell, who runs the www.axemenfootball.com website. On this website, fans can visit to see photos of the games, and get information about the games and players.

I agreed to the job. I never expected it to be so much fun. My job was to roam the field and take pictures of the players, coaches and action. I was surprised by the intensity and the passion the players had for the game. I worked with Dan’s Nikon D70 digital camera. It is one of the nicest cameras I’d ever seen. It takes photos so quickly, allowing me to capture action.

I’ve come to learn it is more than the camera that allows one to have excellent photos. One must have excellent reflexes. One must continuously keep an eye out for opportunities, and then be quick enough to prepare and shoot. On the football field, one needs to have quick reflexes to avoid being trampled by the player’s and avoid glares from the referees. I dodged tackles from plays that ended up next to me several times.

A good photographer needs to be willing to take risks in order to get a good photo. Much of the time, it may not even work. When it works, the photographer is able to create the moments and photos that make the job worth while.

Photography is a fun challenge. One may go out with an idea, but end up with something completely different. Every time one goes out, there are surprises. One never knows what to expect. Elements like fog, rain, and lack of lighting are a few to list. Know how to compensate with these factors, can be one of the most enjoyable parts of the job.

Each game was exciting and fun. They were full of surprises and challenges. No game was the same. During the Roseburg game, I fell into a fever of 103 degrees and had the chills so badly, that I couldn’t walk from my mom’s car to the door. At the Sprague game, the fog was so terrible; we had problems seeing the plays. These challenges are what make the job fun. I have never been this excited over a job.

Before beginning this project, I had wanted to be a marine biologist. A very different career. I wanted a job that would allow me to be outdoors, and would require traveling. Photography requires that and more. Since I began this project, taking pictures is all I want to do. I ordered a camera for which I saved. I am now saving for a new lens.
I have been asked to be a photographer for “The Eugene Runner”, a local magazine. They want me to be their main photographer, after seeing the work I did with the football team.

I’m now working on my application for the University of Oregon. I want to major in photojournalism. After college, I hope to someday work for “The National Geographic” magazine, or the “Outside” magazine. I would also like to work for projects and organizations focusing on human rights. I want to take pictures of people around the world, and bring serious issues to people’s attention.

This project helped me realize what I want to do with my life. I’m moving toward a dream and a career that will allow me to live a lifestyle of travel and adventure. This project taught me the basics of photojournalism, a career that was previously only a fantasy job. Now I know where I’m going. I know what I want to do with my life. The possibilities are endless.
SENIOR PROJECT – REFLECTIVE ESSAY

What is the process that an architect undergoes to design, sell, and eventually construct a building? I chose architecture because I was interested to see if I would like it enough to pursue it as I head off to college. I also have been interested in architecture since a young age; I've always liked thinking about being able to design something as big and magnificent as a building. I haven't really had any way of pursuing it, so this was a great opportunity to do so.

My community advisor was Eric Gunderson, who is the principal at Pivot Architecture. I ended up choosing Eric to be my mentor while on a trip in Bend with him and many other friends from the cosmic campers. The Cosmic Campers are a group of people mostly in their 40's and 50's who have known each other for a long time and go on camping and rafting trips together. I am good friends with the son of one of the original Cosmic Campers. I told the people on the trip that I was going to do architecture for my senior project and I got the same response from all of them; talk to Eric. Eric was very helpful throughout the entire experience; helping me every step of the way and showing me examples so I could understand much easier.

For the first couple of visits Eric and I looked at what Pivot architecture has done, what it's like to be an architect, and then we started to figure out what my design project would be. I thought that being an architect meant sitting alone at a desk and drawing, it is quite the opposite. There is some desk time, but most of your time is spent collaborating with your peers and going to meetings to pitch your ideas to company’s.

Because I am very into sports I thought some sort of sports facility or complex would be fun. Then I saw in the paper that the YMCA wants to build another building so I decide to use that for my project. Eric told me that one of the first things you do when you’re going to design a building is get the clients program, which is a list of what they want in their building. I went to the YMCA and met with Dave Perez, the director, and he gave me a program for the new YMCA and descriptions of all the rooms’ uses. I took that list of rooms and looked them up in a spacing book that gave sizes for different sports facilities rooms. I then used a scale ruler and made cut out pieces of all the rooms. From there I could assemble them as I pleased and then traced my desire design. After ten or so try's I got the rooms situated with each other so that they made sense and so they looked good. I used Google Earth to find the plot of land I wanted to put the building on and I printed a picture out. After a little while I got the scaled model of the YMCA to fit on its site. Other than the design project I sat in on meetings and spent time with various people who explained to me what it was that they were doing.

I learned a lot from this experience; I thought I knew a lot about architecture, but I was sorely wrong. I learned how to use a scaled ruler, I learned how to situate rooms so that they work with each other, and I learned that an idea takes many, many sketches and revisions before it's even remotely concrete. I learned that I like to work with others.
to get something done. Huddling alone over a desk just isn't the type of work environment that I would choose to get into.

An architect first has to find out what a client wants. Then they have to make a presentation to the client that will convince them to go with their firm. If they are chosen then they start preliminary ideas and sketches. After many revisions, ideas start to formulate and the clients are brought in to make sure it meets what they’re looking for. If a final plan is agreed upon then it’s time for the contractors. This senior project showed me that I am interested in pursuing architecture in the future. Whether or not this turns into a career is still undecided and will be for some time.