

Reflection

This paper shows my ability of analyze material. I have always found analyzing stories for English papers very challenging and this was no exception. From Professor Kuribayashi's comments I learned technical things (like to use line numbers instead of page numbers) and conceptual things (like how to make each argument crystal clear to the reader). I feel that during the writing of this paper my ability to be an informative yet concise writer increased.

Writing Sample #1

The following writing sample is one of three papers I wrote for my History Methods (History 288) course at UW-Eau Claire. In this paper I explore a primary source document and begin the process of analysis and interpretation.

This was an invaluable exercise as it helped me gain a better understanding of the process of writing history. History is the analysis and interpretation of primary documents. It is not static, but changes over time due to new information, new interpretations, changing interests, or even shifts in what people believe is important to study. This assignment reinforced and expanded my understanding of this. It is my hope to give my future students similar opportunities as I had with this paper. I wish to use many primary source documents in my future classroom so that students have the chance to analyze and interpret for themselves. Also, in looking at these sources, I hope increase student awareness of the history writing process, from primary sources to what is written in their textbook.

Writing Example #3

The following writing sample is an exercise I completed for The Geography of the U.S. and Canada (Geography 325) at UW-Eau Claire. In this assignment required me to discover what I could about Ohio by looking at its toponyms.

This was an excellent assignment as it demonstrated that more than one social science subject can be combined to answer questions, in this case, geography and history. In the social sciences, there is often crossover, and I hope to demonstrate this to my future students by doing assignments just like this one. This exercise was also a lesson in detailed observation and searching for patterns in order to understand the bigger picture. For example, Ohio's toponyms and their locations tell us much about the history, topography, and vegetation of the state. If we knew nothing about Ohio, we would be able to infer from its toponyms that coal mining was a part of Ohio's history, so were German immigrants, as was Christianity. This assignment also includes visual representations of my findings in the form of maps. I think it is important to include visual representation in the learning process in addition to reading and writing text as it not only appeals to different types of learners, but also offers students another way of accessing and processing data.

Dr. Jeff Leigh was my professor for History 214 at the UW-Marathon campus. The class focused on modern revolutions and required a paper to be written after each revolution had been taught. I am extremely proud of this paper because there was an immense amount of material that was covered in the lectures on the Revolutions of 1848. Understanding what occurred during each revolution in 1848 was a feat in itself, but having to sort out the information and compile it into an essay was even more time consuming and tedious. I worked very hard on this paper and met with my professor several times to make sure that I was on track. It is not difficult to study lecture notes and answer exam questions. On the other hand, it is much more of a challenge to study lecture notes, organize the notes, and create a multi-page essay from the notes. I believe that this essay shows my ability to do just that.