

Your Final Portfolio Checklist

Note: For any documents you are posting online, you may either photograph them and turn them into .pdfs (search for the app “Scanner Mini” on the App store if you have an iPhone) or you may use another hosting site of your choosing. You don’t need to type handwritten notes – post your work in the format you created it, and as it changed.

- Home Page:
 - Original Title that reflects your personality, this class, and/or your inquiry project
 - Original Image(s)
 - Basic introduction to your portfolio.
 - A comprehensive reflective letter (see extended discussion after this list)

- In-class Writings:
 - Your seven best (and best does not necessarily mean “most skillfully written,” either) in-class writings.
 - A 100 word reflection on in-class writing and the experience of writing the seven pieces you chose.

- Inquiry Topic Page:
 - Single page (a new tab)
 - Page should include images, video, memes, gifs, whatever you like.
 - This page is entirely of your own design; it should visually represent your topic. Be creative!
 - A 200 word reflection on your process for this project, using research in your creating, and the use of Storify to tell a story about your research process, among any other thoughts you have on the writing and creating process, academic or otherwise.

- Literacy Narrative:
 - First Draft (before in-class workshop OR the one you submitted for my comments)
 - Final Draft or “Polished Draft” (revised using my notes on your graded paper)
 - Make grammatical changes, format changes, etc.
 - Title this page (or tab) after your paper.
 - A 100 word reflection on writing the Literacy Narrative.

- Vignettes:
 - Your best 5 of the 10 vignettes (keeping in mind the description of “best” above).

Portfolio Evaluation:

- Before engaging with the rest of your portfolio, I will first read your reflective letter. I will be looking for a writer who has thoroughly reviewed the contents of the portfolio and has multiple insightful thoughts about how he or she is working as a writer. This letter should be helpful to the reader (me), and should be able to be used as a guide through the portfolio.

- As I look through your portfolio, I will be looking for the following:
 - Engaged informal writing and reflection of it (How has the writer used the entry to develop his or her thinking and writing?)
 - How has the student approached drafting and revision?

- How “polished” are the polished drafts? What can I determine about what this writer has learned about fine-tuning?
- Has the writer scrutinized the paper and the writing in order to find areas in which to improve, or has the writer relied only on the feedback of others?
- From the reflective letter, polished drafts, and other work contained in the portfolio, can I understand how you have learned to work as a writer?

Final Portfolio Grade Breakdown (I will create a chart like this for you as I grade, and will mark where I deduct points – if you are interested in seeing the chart after the grades are in, come by my office in Cameron, #113 – they will be in a folder on my desk):

Total Portfolio Points: <i>These points will be difficult to earn.</i>		
In class writings	20 pts	
Final Reflection Letter	20 pts	
Polished Literacy Paper	20 pts	
Polished Extended Inquiry Project	20 pts	
Vignettes	20 pts	
Total Portfolio Points:	100 pts	/100

The Final Reflective Letter

The *portfolio* enables you to gain some critical distance from your own work. When drafting the *reflective letter*, you should think of the rest of the portfolio as “data” or “evidence”: you will look at everything you have collected and, as you write your reflective letter, consider where you are as a writer. Through the act of articulation, we can understand more about ourselves, what we are thinking, and how where we are now may be different from where we were in the past.

Generally, writing the reflective letter enables you to

- gain more understanding of where you are now as a writer, what has challenged you in the class and what you have accomplished.
- describe that understanding and those accomplishments to me. It is your initiation of a dialogue with me about the contents of your portfolio, and it is your chance to frame my understanding/evaluation of your work. More specifically, the reflective letter serves four main rhetorical purposes:
 1. It enables you to understand more about your writing and thinking.
 2. It is a forum through which you explain what you have learned and accomplished this semester.
 3. It introduces me to the work in the portfolio.
 4. It brings my attention to certain features of your portfolio. If you have made substantial revisions on any draft since I last saw it, for instance, you should let me know in the reflection.

(Note that the focus here is on YOUR WORK, not on me or the class as a whole. Of course, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't mention me or the class if these subjects come up in your discussion of your work). These purposes **might** lead you in a number of different directions when writing the reflection that will accompany your portfolio:

--discussing the different types/genres of writing you have done in the class (journaling, peer critiques, research, etc.). You might contrast them, thinking through how differently you have approached different writing situations. You might also take a broader view, exploring how these different writings have worked together as you have pursued your work as a writer.

--discussing what you think is your most important work in the class—explaining why and how it connects to your goals as a writer.

--discussing continuity: strengths and weaknesses you note in most of your writing.

--discussing your progress as a writer in the class—challenges you have faced and what you learned as you dealt with these challenges.

--discussing the trajectory of your thinking in the class—how has it changed with and through your writing over the course of the semester?

In all cases, your reflective letter should touch on all of the projects—articulating how the work submitted illustrates your engagement in all aspects of the class.

Your reflection should take a letter form, addressed to me: “Dear Laura” or “Dear Professor Knudson.” **I am your audience—write the letter to me.**

Strategies

I have listed three strategies for approaching the composition of your reflective letter below. You can adopt any of these strategies as you choose. Please use them as **general guidelines**, rather than as specific assignments. You can combine elements from each.

I. Gaining Sophistication with “Literacy” and Writing Over Time

Look at your initial writing in the class and compare it to where you are now. Tell “the story” of your work in the class as it plays out through the various texts. Has your thinking and writing evolved? What have you learned about the relationship between inquiry, interaction with research and peers, and writing? What have you learned about relationships between context and genre?

II. Movement in Writing Ability Over Time:

Look at the work in your portfolio chronologically—starting with the early texts and moving toward the final project. Do you see evolution in your thinking, habits or skills? Look specifically at:

- general rhetorical concerns (such as audience awareness and a clearly articulated purpose).

- editing and revision: have your editing skills become more advanced over time? Is your work becoming more polished? Is your ability to revise your own work and respond to the work of others becoming more sophisticated? How?
- what you can say about your understanding of the “social” aspects (peer review, workshopping, reflection, discussions with the teacher) of writing?
- **III. Highlighting Special Features (essential)**

What texts have undergone substantial revisions since the last time I saw them? What revisions did you make? Are there any special features of your portfolio of which you like me to be especially aware? Any aspect of the class in which you think you were especially engaged and can illustrate with work from the portfolio? *Remember that your reflective letter introduces me to the portfolio. It is your chance to make sure I notice certain of its aspects.*

Additional Notes:

- Again, **the portfolio should generate your insight**— you start with an observation of what is in your portfolio and then begin to write the letter--not the other way around. Take the time to get to know what is in your portfolio AND THEN you can begin to make observations about your progression through the class.
- Tie specific assertions back to specific examples from the portfolio. For instance, if you think you have a better grasp of using research to write for audiences than you did when you first entered the class, you might want to point to specific elements from your work.
- The primary focus of the reflective letter is your writing—not me or the class.
- Don’t feel compelled to create a dramatic narrative of progress.
- Don’t feel compelled to be a salesperson. Recognition of weaknesses and shortcomings are a hallmark of rigorous reflection and learning.
- **How Will I Evaluate your Portfolio?** I will first read your reflective letter. As I read, I might move through the portfolio to investigate specific assertions you make about specific texts or writings. I will be looking for a writer who has thoroughly reviewed the contents of her e-portfolio and has some insightful things to say about how she is working as a writer based on that review. The letter should be:
 - Detailed
 - Genuinely “reflective”
 - Helpful to me as I review the contents of the portfolio I will then do a more thorough page-by-page evaluation. I will be looking to “flesh out” your performance in the class.

- Is the informal writing engaged? Has the writer used it to develop her thinking and writing?
- What can I determine about the rigor with which this writer has approached drafting?
- What can I determine about the rigor with which this writer has approached editing work (your own and your critiques of others)?
- How “polished” are the polished drafts? What can I determine about what this writer has learned about fine-tuning? Generally, the point is to understand how you have learned to work as a writer, rather than to simply evaluate “polished” products. Portfolios that get the highest evaluation show sustained effort in all aspects of the class and a high level of polish in the major assignments. Portfolios that get lower grades show less rigor in certain aspects, and/or have a cursory or unconvincing reflective letter.