

Boost Free Lessons - Year 10 English

Lesson 18: Reflective Response to a Text

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Read the extract below.

My grandmother kept every letter she was ever sent and answered none of them. She said the answering was the part that made it an obligation, and she had not asked to be written to. She read each one twice.

Your task: Write a reflective response of about 350 to 450 words.

A reflective response explores your **personal reaction** to a text and explains it using evidence. It is not a review, and it is not an analytical essay. You will be assessed on the honesty and development of your response, and on your use of evidence to explain it.

Worked Example 1

What makes a reflective response different from an analysis?

1. An **analytical** response explains how a text works. A **reflective** response explains what it did to you, and why.
2. Both use evidence. The difference is what the evidence is used to explain.
3. Start with an honest reaction, even an uncertain one. *I found this uncomfortable and could not immediately say why* is a strong opening.
4. Then interrogate it. Which detail produced the reaction? What does that reveal about you as well as the text?
5. Avoid two traps: summarising the text instead of responding, and asserting a feeling without evidence.

Honest reaction first, then the evidence that produced it, then what it reveals.

Remember: A **reflective** response explains your reaction using evidence. Be honest, including about uncertainty, and interrogate the reaction rather than simply asserting it.



Question 1: Plan your response before you begin writing.

1. My immediate reaction, honestly stated

2. The detail that produced it

3. Why that detail affected me

4. How my reaction changed on rereading

5. What this reveals about the text or about me

6. Where I will end



Question 2: Write your reflective response below. Continue on the next page.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Continue your response here.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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Model Response and Self-Check: Reflective Response to a Text**Model Response**

My first reaction was that the grandmother was being unkind, and it took me two readings to work out that I had brought that judgement with me rather than finding it in the text.

What produced it was the phrase “answered none of them”. I read that as refusal, because the letters seemed to me to deserve a reply, and not replying seemed like a decision made against the people who sent them. I noticed afterwards that the extract never says anyone was hurt. I had supplied that.

The detail that changed my reading was the last sentence: “She read each one twice.” Somebody dismissive reads a letter once, or not at all. Reading twice is attention, and it is deliberate, and it is done in private where nobody will credit her for it. That single sentence undoes the impression the first two build, and the extract puts it last so that the reader has time to reach the wrong conclusion first.

I recognise something in this that I am not entirely comfortable with. My assumption was that care has to be visible to count, that if you do not answer you did not care. The grandmother's position is that the answering is what turns a gift into a debt, and that she had “not asked to be written to”. I do not fully agree with her, but I understand it better than I did, and I am aware that I judged it before I understood it.

What stays with me is how quickly I did that. The extract is three sentences long and I had formed a view of a person by the end of the first one. I think the extract knows this, and is structured to catch a reader doing it, which makes it less a portrait of the grandmother than a small test of the person reading about her.

Check your own response

1. I have given an honest personal reaction, not a summary.
2. I have identified the specific detail that produced my reaction.
3. I have supported my response with short quotations.
4. My response develops rather than repeating one idea.
5. I have explained how or why my reaction changed.
6. I have reflected on what my reaction reveals.
7. I have avoided simply reviewing the text as good or bad.
8. I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

