Response Assignments

In response papers, writers are expected to describe their personal response to a reading assignment and explain why they had this reaction. A response paper is not to provide a review or a rating of the reading.

Be selective in what you choose to include because if you address too many reactions to the literature provided, you will be unable to fully explain why you had that reaction. Focus on 1 significant thought you had while reading and explore that thought in depth. Response papers are usually brief and informal and do not necessarily follow the thesis/support model in most other writing assignments. Furthermore, since response papers are about your own thoughts and feelings, using the first-person pronoun “I” is allowed by most teachers.

While a response paper is like a personal essay—where the student reflects on their own life and thoughts—you must ensure that the literature is kept as the main focus.

Since there are no concrete rules about the structure of response papers, students must carefully read their instructor’s directions and follow them closely.