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My name is Kris Nelson. I'm an adult college student and I've been asked to talk about writing a reflection paper that I wrote.

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Well, the first thing I did was review the assignment instructions and make sure I understood everything my professor wanted. Then I looked up a definition of reflection essay.

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The definition I liked was simple: Share a significant discovery. The discovery could be about anything—something you found out about yourself, about other people, even the world.

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In reflection writing you tell a story. Everybody loves a good story. Once I put those together---a good story about finding out something—the assignment came together for me.

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I also thought about how often I used reflection writing in the real world. I work in the medical field and we have to give reports that narrate—or tell a story about-- that happened. Sometimes in a legal deposition.

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Then I looked for good examples from other writers. I found them in our textbook and on the Web. I wanted to know what makes a good reflection and how to organize it.

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What was most important? An honest voice. I pretended I was talking to a good friend and giving her all the details so she could relive it with me.

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Organization? There are usually five parts in this essay. First the introduction. You set the scene, but with a little mystery or something spicy to make it interesting.

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Next is conflict. There has to be some complication. Some drama, problem to be solved, or decision to be made.

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Then come the effects of the problem or conflict. What happened? This is where the reader's interest is most intense.

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Finally, the problem is over. There's a solution. That's why this section is usually called the resolution.

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Many reflections also have a conclusion. It reinforces the point and circles back to the beginning. Closing the loop, so to speak.

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How did I go about writing it? I start with a list of possible topics. I brainstorm them as fast as I can and not worry about what is coming out. I want quantity, not quality.

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Then I pick one or two to play with. I brainstorm about it. For this topic, I tried to remember as much as I could about the summer of the infamous cookie dough incident.

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After the topic is set, I outline. I'm a big believer in outlines. My motto is: If I can outline it, I can write it. The writing just seems to take care of itself with a good outline.

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On one side of the page I put the five parts—intro, complication, effects, resolution and conclusion. Then I filled in each part with as much detail as I could as fast as I could.

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I ended up with more detail than I needed, but that's a great position to be in! Then I did one more final.

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On a first draft, I write fast and don't worry about anything except getting down my thoughts. I stick to the outline, but if I need to go in a different direction I will. It's just a draft.

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After the first draft, I go back and throw out anything that takes away from my point or the effect I'm going for. Then I find somebody else to read it and give me their reactions. That really helps me.

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On the final draft, I edit and proofread. I like to use the spelling and grammar checker then get someone else to look it over again.

For this essay, I felt like my cousins and my grandmother deserved my best writing.