

Writing Effective Portfolio Summaries

Exhibits, assignments, projects, etc. in your portfolio may need a brief, concise, and well-written summary/analysis. This provides reflective elaboration of the evidence you have included that demonstrates your skills, attitudes, and knowledge. It helps the reviewer of your portfolio understand exactly what the exhibit is supposed to show about you and why it was included. Without these kinds of summaries, portfolios tend to be just large scrapbooks that do not necessarily give a complete and accurate picture of who you are and what you can do.

Every summary/analysis must have:

1. Identification information – your name, name of the exhibit, and date.
2. Description of the specific skills and/or attitudes this exhibit demonstrates.
3. Your own self-assessment including strengths, weaknesses, and goals you set for improvement.

Steps for writing an effective portfolio summary/analysis:

1. Write your name, the name of the exhibit, and the attribute the exhibit is intended to demonstrate at the top of the sheet.
2. Include in the first paragraph a description of the **specific** skills, or attitudes this exhibit demonstrates.
3. Explain in some detail **exactly** what you had to do to complete the assignment, project, or whatever the exhibit is, and **how** this process proves that you have the skills, attitudes, or knowledge you say you are showing.
4. Showing you can self-assess is very important. Discuss how you know the quality of the exhibit you include is at a high level. Just saying you got a good grade on a project, for instance, is not adequate because the reviewer does not know exactly what you had to do to earn that grade. Be clear and complete here and include things like criteria lists and rubrics that specifically show what you had to do to produce a quality exhibit.
5. Another important piece of self-assessment is goal setting and knowing realistically what your strengths and weaknesses are. Indicate in your summary what you are especially proud of in this exhibit and what you are going to work on improving.
6. Check for quality. Proofread your summary and seek input from others. Do the spell and grammar checks because a poorly done summary reflects on the quality of the entire exhibit.
7. Check your exhibits for confidentiality. If you have used samples of assessments or anything which has students' names, schools, addresses, phone numbers, etc., make sure you remove that information from the exhibit.