



## The written assignment – the reflective statement (self-assessment)

The reflective statement is a short piece of writing of between 300 and 400 words. It can be completed outside class time, and there is a lot of scope for personal expression in this piece of work. Remember that the only reflective statement which is assessed by the IB is the one which is directly relevant to your final essay. All IB students have to complete at least one reflective statement.

The following self-assessment is based on a student's response to her study of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.

The questions	Some points to think about for your reflective statement	Optional or required?	Student's reflections
<p>What elements of the role played by context were illuminated or developed by you?</p>	<p>To what extent did you <b>understand</b> the different contexts (biographical, social, historical, artistic) which helped shape the work?</p> <p>How satisfactorily did you articulate these in the interactive oral? (Think about the 'what' and the 'when').</p> <p>To what extent did you <b>interpret</b> these different contexts? (Think about the 'why' and the 'how').</p>	<p>Required</p>	<p>I thought I did quite well here. I did a lot of research on the historical context of my text and this helped support my literary analysis. I listened carefully and responded clearly, although there were some points I wish I'd included.</p>



<p>What aspects of the discussion most interested you?</p>	<p>A personal response is required here. What stimulated you most of all, and why?</p> <p>Relate your points to the works under discussion; make the connections between your experiences and those explored in the text relevant and appropriate.</p>	<p>Optional</p>	<p>I responded particularly well to the points made about the position of women in the society the author describes. Being female, I felt that I empathised a great deal with the heroine's ideas, and although a great deal has changed since the 19th century I felt that the arguments I put forward showed that these issues remain relevant today – to men and women.</p>
<p>What new angles on the work did the discussion provoke for you?</p>	<p>These new angles could come from your classmates as well as yourself (remember: the discussion is 'interactive', and you should show how you are learning from others).</p> <p>Again, you should keep the text at the centre of your writing.</p>	<p>Optional</p>	<p>One area which I had not considered in much detail was the role that class played in the oppression of the male characters in the play. I suppose I went for a more 'feminist' interpretation of this text, which I still think is valid, but it was after listening to my other classmates' thoughts, and the work that they had done on the socialist background to this writer, that I realised that other interpretations were also valid.</p>



## Sample reflective statement

This student then went on to write a reflective statement based on this interactive oral. Read the following extract from the student's reflective statement and then evaluate it, bearing in mind the following points:

- The tone used by the student.
- Whether the information provided by the student is appropriate.
- Any other comments you think are relevant.

I was pleased with how the interactive oral went. I was able to both listen to others and learn from what they had to say, and I was also pleased that I had the time to put forward some of my main arguments.

I approached this text from a 'feminist' perspective: for me, the central character is a woman who is made a victim simply because she is a woman. The author makes it clear that she is repressed for being both physically and emotionally weaker than the male characters: at least, that is the perception, but the reader is aware, through the internal monologue that re-occurs at the end of each key stage, that she is by far the most self-aware and resolute of them all.

Each stage of her journey is punctuated by a series of injustices, and each resonate with me as a female student: they articulated what for me is a fundamental truth: namely, that in a patriarchal society women can too often become marginalised. However, there is another truth evident here: that if women retain their own distinctive voices, there is hope for others. This is clearly shown in the final stage of the text when the child who is thought to have been given away to a more 'deserving' (affluent) family returns to his mother.

It was clear, after discussing this with my classmates, that many of the male characters are also repressed by a system that keeps them imprisoned. However, my argument was that female characters in the text are doubly repressed – by class and gender – and that it is through language that they become free. By liberating women, society becomes freer.

I wish I could have spoken more about the language that is used in this text: it is so cleverly written but I felt there simply wasn't time. I also wanted to speak more about the structure because although I love the text dearly there are times when it seems forced and intended to manipulate our emotions. In that sense, it does seem contrived, but it is worth it because the power of the text has the power to change our view of ourselves and society.



### Interactive oral: self-assessment sheet

After analysing the sample reflective statement, use this copy of the self-assessment sheet to evaluate your own performance in your interactive orals.

The questions	Some points to think about for your reflective statement	Optional or required?	Student's reflections
<p>What elements of the role played by context were illuminated or developed by you?</p>	<p>To what extent did you <b>understand</b> the different contexts (biographical, social, historical, artistic) which helped shape the work?</p> <p>How satisfactorily did you articulate these in the interactive oral? (Think about 'what' and 'when'.)</p> <p>To what extent did you <b>interpret</b> these different contexts? (Think about 'why' and 'how'.)</p>	<p>Required</p>	
<p>What aspects of the discussion most interested you?</p>	<p>A personal response is required here. What stimulated you most of all, and why?</p> <p>Relate your points to the works under discussion; make the connections between your experiences and those explored in the text relevant and appropriate.</p>	<p>Optional</p>	
<p>What new angles on the work did the discussion provoke for you?</p>	<p>These new angles could come from your classmates as well as yourself (remember: the discussion is 'interactive', and you should show how you are learning from others).</p> <p>Again, you should keep the text at the centre of your writing.</p>	<p>Optional</p>	