

# **UNDERSTANDING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

Multilingual Student Support  
Camosun College

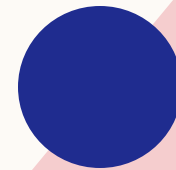
# PRIMARY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES:

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to...

- recognize similarities between assignments
- create a strategy for reading and beginning an assignment
- identify key terms used in various types of assignments
- decrease stress around starting an assignment

# OVERVIEW

- **Types of assignments**
- **Task prompts**
- **Key terms**
- **Phases of development**
- **Criteria for assessment**
- **The assessment tool (rubrics)**
- **Strategies for success**



# CONSIDER:

1. Have you ever misunderstood assignment guidelines? If yes, what happened?
2. What can you do to ensure you understand what is expected on an assignment?
3. What are the greatest challenges in completing an assignment successfully?

# COMMON TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS <sup>5</sup>

## Written

- Annotated Bibliography
- Essay
- Article Review
- Book Review
- Research Paper
- Literature Review
- Summaries
- Op-Ed
- Reflective Writing
- Reports (*Executive, Business, Short form/ Summary, Technical, Evaluation, Lab*)

## Spoken (Oral)

- Presentation
- Seminar leader
- Panel discussion
- Interview/ Survey
- Poster Session
  
- This is not an exhaustive list!

**Which of these assignment types have you done? Which are unfamiliar?**

# TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

- Familiarize yourself with your department's most common assignment types.
- Review the course outline/ syllabus in detail to prepare yourself.
- Ask your instructor if you are unclear of the task or expectations for an assignment.

## Tips for success with types of assignments:

- <https://usq.pressbooks.pub/academicsuccess/chapter/types-of-assignments/>

# SAMPLE TASK PROMPTS

Read the prompt carefully. Highlight the **verb** and the **type of product**. Then, identify the **WHAT/HOW**.

Arts	Science	Engineering
Working in groups, <b>create</b> a short <b>presentation</b> on a <b>specific mental illness</b> and <b>describe</b> effective treatments used in modern clinical settings.	<b>Write</b> a <b>report</b> describing the experiments designed and the interpretation of possible results.	<b>Present</b> a <b>case study report</b> on a significant <b>mechanical engineering milestone</b> highlighting the <b>societal and environmental impacts</b> that contributed to the completion of the event.

Table data from: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-students/aligning-outcomes-assessments-and-instruction>

# IDENTIFYING KEY TERMS

- **Analyze:** Divide something into parts and show how the parts work together to produce the overall result or pattern.
- **Apply:** select a proposed theory/ hypothesis/ framework and put it in dialogue with an existing text/subject.
- **Argue:** take a position on an issue and defend your position with reasons and evidence.
- **Compare/Contrast:** explain how two (or more) texts/subjects are the same or different and explain why.



# IDENTIFYING KEY TERMS

- **Evaluate:** assess the positive and negative attributes of an argument or text using your own ideas and perspective.
- **Reflect:** relate the content to your personal and lived experiences.
- **Respond:** engage with an existing argument/text by offering your own views and analysis.
- **Review:** examine a text/subject in detail.
- **Summarize:** articulate the main ideas of a text in your own words.

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list but includes the most frequently used terms across task type.*

# TO DO: EXAMINE A PAST OR CURRENT ASSIGNMENT

What verbs are used? Highlight the ACTIONABLE items on your assignment. Actionable = act on/ having practical value. How do you apply your knowledge to the task?

Are there any unfamiliar verbs? If so, what is your strategy to understand them?

# CONSIDER PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

## TIME MANAGEMENT – MAKE A PLAN

<b>PRE-WRITING</b> (Before you begin working on the assignment)	<b>DRAFTING</b> (This phase takes the bulk of your time)	<b>REVISION</b> (Take care with this phase)
<p><b>Analyze:</b> What is your <b>purpose</b>?            (What are you trying to achieve?            What is the goal of the assignment?)</p> <p><b>Anticipate:</b> Who is your <b>audience</b>?            (Students usually just say the instructor – BUT does it also include the class? Or is it a role play, a case study, etc.?)</p> <p><b>Set Limits:</b> What are the <b>restrictions</b> or elements to avoid? (e.g. sources or length)</p>	<p><b>Research:</b> Gather data.</p> <p><b>Organize:</b> Format ideas.</p> <p><b>Draft:</b> Prepare a first draft.</p>	<p><b>Edit:</b> Check for clarity of ideas, tone, readability.</p> <p><b>Proofread:</b> Look for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, &amp; format.</p> <p><b>Evaluate:</b> Did the product achieve its goal? Reflect on the <b>assignment guidelines</b> and <b>original question about purpose</b>.</p>



# **ASSESSMENT**

Understanding expectations

# CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

These will differ greatly depending on what you are studying. BUT there can be some more global features of assessment such as the following:

- Content
- Task Achievement
- Grammar
- Mechanics
- Formatting

See: <https://camosun.libguides.com/c.php?g=711496&p=5140019>

# ASSESSMENT TOOL: RUBRIC

- Every instructor is different. Many instructors use **rubrics** for **written or more complex tasks**.
- Rubrics are an assessment tool that clearly indicates **achievement criteria** across all the components of any kind of student work, from written to oral to visual.
- **Understand the criteria** in a rubric **and the range** within. Strive for the highest criteria standards. Avoid the lowest ranking standards.
- **Holistic, Analytic or Single Point** rubrics are used, depending on the type of final assessment you will receive (letter grades (%) in most credit courses should use analytic.)
- See: <https://camosun.libguides.com/AFL/rubrics>

# SAMPLE RUBRIC

## WITH CRITERIA PERFORMANCE LEVELS & DESCRIPTORS

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Organization	Organization enhances and showcases the main idea.	Organization is smooth with only a few issues.	Some structure exists but the flow of ideas is difficult to follow.	Organization cannot be identified and lacks a sense of direction.
Voice	The writer's voice is compelling and engaging in delivering the purpose and topic of the piece.	The writer's voice attempts to address the topic and purpose in an engaging way but is inconsistent in delivery.	The writer's voice is difficult to identify although an attempt is present.	The writer's voice seems indifferent, uninvolved or distanced from the topic or purpose.
Sentence Fluency	Sentences are sophisticated with strong, varied sentence structure that invites expressive reading.	Sentences are varied, structurally correct and flow well.	Sentence structure is usually correct but sentences do not flow.	Sentence structure is choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward.

- Table from: <https://camosun.libguides.com/AFL/rubrics>

# STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

1. Break your assignment into **manageable CHUNKS**; easier to approach.
2. Use **TOOLS** to plan your **time management**. Use a **calendar tool** with reminders built in for different stages of assignment; **work back from the due date**.  
Example: <https://assignmentcalculators.library.ubc.ca/>
3. Set up a **STUDY GROUP** (f2f or online) with your classmates: Check in with their understanding of and progress on the assignment.
4. Make **appointment(s) with YOUR INSTRUCTOR** to review assignment guidelines if unclear.
5. Use **CAMPUS SUPPORT**: contact **your school's MSS** if you need further help, use the **Writing Centre** or **Lib Guides** (for citation help). Attend library workshops.



# SUMMARY

- Assignments don't have to be scary!
- Use strategies around vocabulary/ key word identification, time management and knowledge of expectations to help guide you.
- Know you are not alone. Use campus support!

# THANK YOU

Multilingual Student Support

For more workshops and materials, please see  
our WordPress website:



# REFERENCES

Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Instruction. (2022, Dec. 14). University of Waterloo.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-students/aligning-outcomes-assessments-and-instruction>

Assessment: Rubrics. (2022, Dec. 14.) Camosun College.

<https://camosun.libguides.com/AFL/rubrics>

Assessment: Types of Assessment. (2022, Dec. 14). Camosun College.

<https://camosun.libguides.com/AFL/types-of-assessment>

The Assignment Calculators. (2022, Dec. 14). University of British Columbia.

<https://assignmentcalculators.library.ubc.ca/>

Types of Assignments. (2022, Dec. 14). University of Southern Queensland.

<https://usq.pressbooks.pub/academicsuccess/chapter/types-of-assignments/>

# REFERENCES

Understanding your assignment. (2022, Dec. 14). Wilfred Laurier University.

<https://students.wlu.ca/academics/support-and-advising/writing-support/assets/resources/understanding-your-assignment.html>

Understanding your assignment guidelines. (2022, Dec. 14). Academic Support Resources.

<https://assignmentcalculators.library.ubc.ca/>