

APSU Writing Center

Reading an Assignment Sheet

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- The first step when you receive an assignment sheet is to read through the content to find out what your instructor is asking you to do.

Note Key Information

- Write down or highlight important information and answer these questions:
 - When is this assignment due?
 - What citation style will you be using?
 - What is the page or word requirement and limit?
 - What requirements are the most important?
 - What topics are interesting to you?

Action Verbs

- Look for action verbs such as analyze, argue, compare, contrast, evaluate, explain, narrate, research, summarize, synthesize, and more.
 - **Analyze:** Review the information given and offer a critical interpretation. Break down the topic elements into details that you can draw significance from.
 - **Argue:** Analyze a topic and take a side. Make a case for your point of view and try to convince your audience it is important. Give supporting evidence and analysis.
 - **Compare and Contrast:** Show similarities and differences between two or more things.
Compare: similarities Contrast: differences
 - **Define:** Give the exact meaning of the topic.
 - **Describe:** Go in detail on a topic and mention who, what, when, and where things happen.
 - **Discuss:** Investigate the details and provide evidence for or against two different ideas.
 - **Examine:** Take a closer look at the topic in detail.
 - **Explain:** Make the information easier to understand by breaking the topic down.
 - **Explore:** Consider the topic in a broad sense and look into other viewpoints.
 - **Evaluate:** Give a judgement or opinion on how the information presented is relevant.
 - **Identify:** Recognize a specific piece of evidence or idea.
 - **Illustrate:** Use evidence, visual aids, or diagrams to make something clear.
 - **Justify:** Give evidence that supports a claim or argument.
 - **Outline:** Give the main points without going into too much detail.
 - **Summarize:** restate the most important points in a more condensed format

Research

- If you are asked to use outside sources, consider using the the [APSU Woodward Library](#) which subscribes to a large collection of article databases and online resources accessible to all registered students, faculty, staff and the university community, both on campus and off-campus.

Consider Audience

- Give content to your audience about the story you are going over or the sources you are including in your writing.
- Your audience should be able to gather the main points from your arguments without having to read other materials.

Ask Questions

- If you are unsure about what your instructor is asking, clarify with them directly.



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References

Harvard College Writing Center. (2023). *Tips for Reading an Assignment Prompt*. Harvard College Writing Center. <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/tips-reading-assignment-prompt>

Middle Tennessee State University. (2023). *COM 2: Reading an Assignment Sheet*. Middle Tennessee State University Writing Center
<https://www.mtsu.edu/writingcenter/handouts/COM2Reading.php>