

Thinking About Your Assignment: A Worksheet

This worksheet will enable you to learn as much as possible about your assignment, so that you will be able to write your essay with greater insight. Follow each of the steps below, writing your response in the space provided.

1. Read the assignment aloud to yourself, paying particular attention to the place where the writing task is discussed.

2. List the key terms in the assignment that give directions.

List any terms that need to be defined. _____

3. Summarize in your own words the type of writing task that the assignment requires. Remember that most college writing assignments require a thesis or main point and that although you may not know yet what that thesis will be, eventually you will have to formulate one.

4. What type of information does this paper require? Will the information be based primarily on personal experience or opinion? Will you need to find information from the library or the Internet?

5. Locate any implicit requirements that may not be directly stated, but which are necessary in order for the assignment to be completed satisfactorily.

Does this assignment require you to define terms? If so, which ones?

Does this assignment require you to develop a relationship between ideas? If so, which ideas must be connected?

Does this assignment require you to take a position on a controversial subject? If so, list two opposing views.

Does this assignment require you to consider questions of degree or make a judgment (does it say "to what extent" for example)?

6. Who is the audience for this paper, aside from your teacher? What sort of knowledge about the topic do you assume the audience has?

Respond to the following questions about audience:

Before the people in my audience have read this paper, they are likely to have the following beliefs about this topic:

After the people in my audience have read this paper, I would like them to have the following beliefs about this topic:

7. Why does this topic matter? Why would anyone care about it? Why is it important to think about? Are there implications or consequences that should be addressed?

8. A possible thesis or main point for this paper might be _____

Source:

Clark, Irene L. *Writing in the Center*. 3rd ed. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1998.