How to Analyze your Assignment Instructions

1. Read the instructions all the way through, including the grading scheme or rubric.
2. Read again, underlining key verbs (write, research, respond, interpret, create, etc.) and nouns (essay, lab report, podcast, etc.). Note course-specific language or ideas that you must include in your work.
   1. Take notes or use digital tools to highlight or comment on the instructions. This allows you to easily identify important details.
   2. Use the following template to ensure you have noted all relevant details. You can change the prompts or add additional information to apply to your assignment instructions.
   3. You may find it helpful to make a checklist (see sample below) to use as you complete your assignment.
3. Make a list of tasks to complete to plan your assignment. [See our guide on analyzing and planning assignments.](https://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/how-guides/how-write-university/planning-your-assignment)
   1. You might also want to try [an assignment calculator like this one from University of Toronto Scarborough](https://digital.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignment-planner).

## Assignment Analysis Template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What am I being asked to do? How does this assignment fit with the course? | |
| What kind of product/item do you need to submit? (e.g., essay, report, reflection, podcast, blog, presentation, etc.) |  |
| What does this item look like?  What resources can help me understand the expectations? | [Academic Skills: How to Approach Any Assignment](https://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/how-guides/how-write-university/how-approach-any-assignment) |
| Why am I doing it?  How does it fit with course learning objectives and course syllabus? |  |
| Requirements | |
| Length |  |
| # sources  Types of sources  Referencing style |  |
| Deadline |  |
| (other) |  |
| (other) |  |
| (other) |  |
| Grading Criteria  (update to reflect rubric or grading scheme) | |
| Argument/Analysis/Thesis |  |
| Organization/Structure |  |
| Creativity/New Insights |  |
| Clarity/Style |  |
| (other) |  |
| (other) |  |
| (other) |  |

## Make a checklist

* Did I meet all the requirements?
* Research/Evidence
  + Do I back up my points with evidence?
  + Do I provide citations for my evidence?
  + Do I use the required # of sources?
  + Do the sources I use fit the requirements?
* Thesis/Analysis
  + Do I present a focused and analytical position?
  + Do I explain how evidence supports this position?
  + Do I explain the relevance/implications/importance of this position in the context of the field of study?
* Organization/Structure
  + Do my ideas follow a logical order?
  + Do I explain connections between ideas or between supporting points and my thesis?
* Relevance to course/use of course concepts
  + Are my ideas and evidence relevant to course themes and learning objectives?
* Clarity of communication
  + Have I reviewed my work more than once to ensure my writing is specific and direct?
  + Have I reviewed my work to identify and correct grammatical errors?
* Use of appropriate documentation
  + Do I use in-text citations using the required format?
  + Do I have a list of references in the required format?
* Length
  + Does this paper meet the required page or word count?
* Did I track my research and writing process (keep research notes, version history of my draft or different files of drafts)?
* Other
* Other