

Reading an Assignment Sheet

APSU Writing Center Handout

Reading your assignment sheet carefully is the first step in planning and completing your work.

Note Key Information

Write down or highlight important details:

- Due date
- Citation style (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.)
- Page or word count requirement
- Formatting (Times New Roman, Double-spaced, 12-point font, etc.)
- Topics that interest you

Understanding Action Verbs

Action verbs tell you what your instructor expects you to do.

- **Analyze:** Review information critically. Break down details and explain significance.
- **Argue:** Choose a side and give evidence to convince your argument.
- **Compare and Contrast:** Show similarities (compare) and differences (contrast).
- **Define:** Give the exact meaning of a term or concept.
- **Describe:** Provide detailed information such as who, what, when, and where things happen.
- **Discuss:** Investigate the details and provide evidence for or against ideas.
- **Examine:** Take a closer look at the topic in detail.
- **Explain:** Break down information to make it easier to understand.

- **Explore:** Consider the topic broadly and review other viewpoints.
- **Evaluate:** Give a judgment or opinion on the relevance of information.
- **Identify:** Recognize a specific piece of evidence or idea.
- **Illustrate:** Use examples, evidence, or diagrams to clarify a point.
- **Justify:** Provide evidence supporting a claim or argument.
- **Outline:** Present the main points without excessive detail.
- **Summarize:** Restate the key points concisely.

Research

Use outside sources if required. APSU students can access the Woodward Library for:

- Article databases
- Online resources (on-campus or off-campus)

Consider Audience

Make your points clear and easy to understand.

Your audience should understand your arguments without needing extra materials.

Ask Questions

If anything is unclear, ask your instructor.

Clarifying early prevents mistakes and saves time.

Plan Your Approach

After reviewing the assignment:

- Decide on a thesis or focus.
- Draft a quick outline of sections or key points.
- Identify research needs and order of tasks.

Break down your assignment

- Read the entire assignment instruction sheet.
- Highlight key points of interest such as page requirements, word length, the main topic, and more.
- Write out the question in your own words.

Brainstorm ideas after reading the question:

Restate the question in your own words:

Give evidence to support your answer to the question:

Analyze your evidence and explain why it is important:

Key closing statement or summary:

References

Harvard College Writing Center. (2023). *Tips for Reading an Assignment Prompt*.

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/tips-reading-assignment-prompt>

Middle Tennessee State University. (2023). *COM 2: Reading an Assignment Sheet*.

<https://www.mtsu.edu/writingcenter/handouts/COM2Reading.php>