

EFFECTIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Designing Effective Assignment Sheets

The effectiveness of an assignment sheet will vary with the nature and purpose of the task, but all assignment sheets need to give students the information they need to understand the assignment.

To do that, writing assignment sheets should include an explanation of Audience, Purpose, Occasion, Recommended Strategies, Grading Criteria, and other details. Research on writing assignments suggests that students respond most favorably to assignments that clearly outline these elements, resemble the kinds of writing they might do in the workplace, and allow them to do something with their knowledge other than merely regurgitate it.

Acknowledgment: This material has been adapted from ideas developed by Dr. Donna LeCourt of Colorado State University.

AUDIENCE: To Whom Are You Writing?

Decide to what extent you will define the audience for students based on your goals for the assignment. The more specifically you define the audience, the more you constrain or focus the final product.

Consider the following audience characteristics: age, ethnicity, gender, education, religion, political affiliation, position within an organization, knowledge of subject, opinion/feelings toward subject.

PURPOSE: What Do You Hope This Piece Of Writing Will Accomplish?

Students need to know the key verb or verbs—the goal of the piece of writing. The more specifically you can state that goal, the more likely they will be able to meet your expectations. Some common purposes for writing in the workplace include the following—informing,