

DECODING YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

THE ONE ABOUT TASK

Task

- What do I need to do?
- What roadblocks might exist that I need to avoid?
- Why might the instructions be unclear?
- In what order do I need to complete the assignment?
- What is the best way to approach this assignment?

"How should I complete this assignment?"

WHEN THE TASK ISN'T CLEAR

Tips from fellow students

- Check with a classmate to see if they understand the assignment or if there was something you misunderstood.
- Email or meet with your instructor ahead of time to gain clarity on assignment content and instructions. This involves planning for deadlines ahead of time.
- Sometimes the task isn't clear on purpose because there are multiple ways to complete an assignment or figuring out the right way to complete the assignment is what you have been learning in the class.
- Make sure to attend class. If it seems confusing, others might ask in class and you will get your answers there!

WHEN THE TASK SEEMS TOO BIG

Breaking it down

A large assignment can seem daunting. If the overall task seems daunting, coming up with an action plan to help break it down will help you manage the individual steps. This will help you focus on smaller tasks one at a time.

1. Read the assignment and note all of the deadlines and key details.
2. Break the assignment into individual components
 - a. For papers this can be choosing a topic, thesis, research, draft, proofreading, etc.
 - b. For reading assignments, you can break them down into smaller chunks
3. Working backward from the due date, estimate a time for each part and schedule them on a timeline.
4. Add the individual timeline dates to your calendar so if you have multiple assignments you can realistically plan out your time.

You don't have to do this alone!

You can work with an Academic Coach, Advisor, or even a friend to help. Visit [Tutor Iowa](#) to find Academic Tips Worksheets with planning resources.

