An assignment worksheet for writing a good assignment. From "Our Students Aren't in Our Heads With Us," Rebecca Weaver, Georgia State University-Perimeter College. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 8 Feb 2018 (online).

Assignment Sheet: Assignment Sheet
Drafts of prospectus / notes: before we write a draft
Draft to colleague for Peer Review due: before we give to students
Final draft due: when we give to students

Purpose: The goal here is to create a clear, substantive, and complete assignment sheet that accurately describes the purpose, expectations, range, length, format, and other details of what we want our students to do. They should know what skills, concepts, or knowledge is expected of them to display or practice. This is the place where we make the stakes as clear as possible: What does an assignment such as this help them do? Why do people in our field do this kind of intellectual task? What should our students get out of this assignment? Who is their audience?

Objectives: Here is where we can get into the details of the kind of writing students need to do. In my composition assignment sheets, this section contains abbreviations of the departmental objectives for composition classes, as well as the specific intellectual skills this particular assignment asks them to perform.

Assignment Specifics: This is a good place to list due dates and expectations for smaller preliminary documents such as a project prospectus (planning document or outline), an annotated bibliography, or some kind of worksheet. It's good for background information, too. In various assignment sheets, I have used this space for contextual information, brainstorming ideas, class readings that the paper is accountable to, and other items that would be helpful.

Getting Started: This is a great place to be materially and intellectually helpful and to do some of our best teaching. Here we set a helpful and useful tone for the assignment--students should see this as a useful resource, not as a list of commands or just a checklist to go through. Students are helped by explicitly laying out a process by which writing happens, and they respond well when we can anticipate the questions they'll have.

- If this assignment involves some aspect of research, begin with what kinds of research sources they'll be expected to use and how to access those sources
- Where and how to begin developing a topic, where and how the students should find sources, and repeat the dates that preliminary documents (such as a research prospectus or a bibliography) are due. Consider listing which class sessions will be devoted to group and individual topic brainstorming, topic workshops, or other process writing, as well has what they'll be expected to do outside of class to get the paper done
- If you don't list them above, this is a good space for listing brainstorming or free-writing questions for your students to respond to
- Dates of library or other resource sessions that will be appropriate
- Dates of conferences with professor to discuss the paper
- Where students can find examples of this genre of writing
- Links to resources, including campus offices, technical support, websites, or any other kinds of helpful information.

Evaluation: I often tell my students that my grading isn't objective, but it is transparent. What I mean by this is that all profs have different criteria by which we grade, even within the same discipline, and that's fine. The important part is that we tell our students exactly what we're looking for in the paper and how it will be graded:

- Begin with the big stuff—the abstract ideas or really important skills students need to develop here, such as argumentative or analytical skills
- Include discipline-specific particularities about this kind of writing
- Mention how much of their class grade this assignment is worth
- Describe what an "A" assignment would look like
- Move from large concerns such as concepts and skill sets down to small concerns such as grammar and conventions

Any other important items here: This is a place to include information that doesn't quite fit into the above categories. I use this as a place to address questions about the assignment that I didn't address the last time, or other resources that might be useful.