

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT AND RUBRIC

1. The Assignment

For most assignments, you will be provided 1.) an Overview, 2.) Instructions, and 3.) the Requirements.

The Overview is usually a brief paragraph or two that reflects back on what was covered in the unit and ties that to what will be covered in the assignment.

The Instructions are exactly as they sound: They provide clear directions as to what is expected from you, the writer, when completing this assignment.

Pay considerable attention to any bulleted items that may be listed:

character or location is significant to you.

Instructions:

- Write one paragraph about your favorite character or location from a movie or television series. *(Please be aware that if you share information that is distressing, then your instructor is mandated to share that information with our counseling center.)*
- Consider the following questions when writing this paragraph:
 - What about this character or location makes it so significant?
 - How would you describe that character or location to someone who has not seen the movie? Consider appearance, personality, and sensory imagery when building this description.

Narrative and descriptive writing is a combination of description and reflection. You want to include specific details to show the reader what you are writing about and then reflect

**example from ENG110 – College Writing; Unit 1 Assignment: Descriptive Paragraph*

The Requirements provide the criteria that you will be assessed on. These often provide formatting rules you will need to follow (APA Style, font size/style, spacing and margins), the length requirements of the assignment (in pages or sentences), and other guidelines that will need to be considered.

These requirements are important to pay attention to, as these will coincide with the assignment's rubric.

2. The Rubric

A Rubric is an assessment tool your instructor will use when grading your assignment. See the example provided below:

Evaluation Rubric for the <i>Descriptive Essay</i> Assignment				
CRITERIA	Novice	Emerging	Competent	Exemplary
Description and Details	(0–14 Points)	(15–19 Points)	(20–22 Points)	(23–25 Points)
	The content does not include any descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes few descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes some descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes many descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.
Reflection	There is no clear reflection on the subject in the assignment.	There is little clear reflection on the subject in the assignment.	There is some clear reflection on the subject in the assignment.	There is clear reflection on the subject in the assignment.
Organization and Structure	(0–11 Points)	(12–15 Points)	(16–17 Points)	(18–20 Points)
	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. Paragraph structure is not properly used in the assignment.	Writing has little discernible organization, and some details are not in a logical or expected order. Paragraph	Writing is organized, and details are placed in a logical order. Paragraph structure is typically properly	Writing is effective, purposeful, and well organized. Paragraph structure is effectively properly used in the assignment.

There are two main component to most rubrics you will find:

Criteria: Under this column, you see the areas of the assignment on which you will be graded. You will notice that these will align with the assignment’s instructions and requirements.

Point Scale: A point scale indicates how many points will be awarded in addressing each criteria. Each scale typically begins with “0 points” on the left-hand side. The scale will build up to an established total amount of points available for fully addressing each criteria. (This top-end range will not always be the same.) You will notice that the top-end range of all the criteria listed will equal “100”.

3. Reading a Rubric

Knowing what's in a rubric and understanding how to read a rubric are different. Typically, you will see that a rubric builds from "0 points" to full credit. Earning zero points means that you did not address a specific criteria for that assignment. Earning full points means you addressed the competency at an exemplary level.

However, you will often find areas in between. Consider this similar to a scale that would range from poor, adequate, good, and excellent.

Earning full points comes down to understanding the terms assigned in the rubric and how to fully address each criteria.

Consider the following:

CRITERIA	Novice	Emerging	Competent	Exemplary
	(0–14 Points)	(15–19 Points)	(20–22 Points)	(23–25 Points)
Description and Details	The content does not include any descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes few descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes some descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.	The content includes many descriptions and details about the subject and its significance to the writer.

Each of the boxes have similar wording, but notice there is a slight difference when discussing **HOW MUCH** description and detail there is:

"The content does not include **ANY** descriptions and details..." = 0 – 14 Points
 "The content includes **FEW** descriptions and details..." = 15 – 19 Points
 "The content includes **SOME** description and details..." = 20 – 22 Points
 "The content includes **MANY** descriptions and details..." = 23 – 25 Points

As you can see, there is room for interpretation, as no set number is given for the words "few," "some," or "many." It comes to you, the writer, to provide as much description and detail in order to score as many points as possible for this specific criteria.