## Describing the Writing Portion of an Assignment

### For your course:
Consider why students write in your course
Consider how each assignment can achieve one (or all) of these aims

### For each assignment:
1. **Consider and foreground primary goals**
2. **Consider and articulate secondary goals**
3. **Offer non-examples**
4. **Provide models or guidance**
5. **Offer possible first steps**

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### 1. Consider the most important goal/s for the assignment.
   a. Consider your primary goal/s in terms of content-oriented aims (e.g., engagement with a particular concept or text) and skill-oriented aims (e.g., close analysis; synthesis of secondary sources).
   b. Ensure your central goals are possible within the parameters of the single assignment and that they speak to the larger goals of the course and the order in which they are being addressed.
   c. Find a way to state and elucidate primary goals in the assignment description, for example, via particular verbs and nouns. E.g., apply a theory or concept; identify and summarize key events or texts; analyze an argument in terms of its logic; analyze a theme in a primary text; analyze language in a primary text; synthesize arguments made in secondary scholarship; summarize and depart from arguments made in primary and secondary texts.

### 2. Consider ancillary goals for the project. Consider any secondary goals. Ensure these goals are addressed in your assignment description but that they are in service of the foregrounded, central goal/s. E.g., Before outlining your proposed amendment to international trade policy, you will need to review relevant aspects of international trade policy for a general (or specialized) audience.

### 3. Offer a non-example of a possible topic or approach, such as a topic that is too unwieldy or too narrow, or an approach that misunderstanding the assignment (e.g., one that emphasizes personal opinion versus textual or scientific evidence).
   a. Ex: By February 29, you will need to have honed your focus to something that you can discuss and draw interesting conclusions about within 1250 words (e.g., if you want to compare modifiers for president in newspaper versus magazine writing, choose one or two modifiers in each macrogenre; or compare collocations with president in Entertainment versus African American magazines).
   b. It can also be useful to contrast an assignment with a previous assignment (e.g., Whereas the first assignment asked you to offer a reading response or think-piece on a single work, this assignment asks you to offer a more nuanced and evidence-based argument based on a primary but also secondary texts.)

### 4. Direct students to models, such as past student essays or texts you are reading in the course that are similar in style, organization, or use of evidence. (E.g., a similarly close analysis of a passage; a comparative analysis of approaches to international policy that manages to address a solution as well as implications; a piece that organizationally or stylistically demonstrates relevant rhetorical options).

### 5. Offer possible first steps which foreground the process and goals you most want to emphasize in this assignment. (E.g., should students begin with their own ideas or interests? Should they begin with primary texts? Should they begin with secondary texts?)

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