

Understand your assignment instructions in 4 steps

Follow the four steps below to make sense of your assignment instructions. Use the right side of the page to complete each step based on your assignment instructions.

1 Read the instructions.



Then, re-read the instructions and answer the following question: **What do you need to do to complete the assignment?**

Check the prompt for keywords such as:

- **Analyze/examine**-to study a topic closely and carefully
- **Explain/define**-to make a topic clear by describing it in detail
- **Compare & contrast/ discuss**-to write about a topic in detail, taking into account different ideas and opinions
- **Evaluate/critique**-to examine an issue critically to assess its effectiveness
- **Argue**-to take a position on a topic, and make a case for that position
- **Reflect**-to critically analyze an experience to illustrate comprehension

What do you need to do to complete the assignment?

2 Make a to-do list.



After determining the focus of the assignment, read the instructions **one more time and note tasks you need to complete before you can begin to write.**

Pre-writing tasks may include:

- Read course materials: articles or books.
- Watch course materials: films or videos
- Conduct fieldwork: observation, interviews, etc.

Do you have to do **research** to complete this assignment?

If so, pay attention to the type of sources required to use to write the assignment. *Do you need to use **peer-reviewed journals**? **Case studies**? **Books**? **The DSM-V**?*

Do you need to visit the **PO Library Website**?

Make your to-do list here:

Turn over for steps 3 and 4 →

3 Take note of the format and length.



Examine the assignment instructions for **formatting and length requirements**.

What format do you have to use to complete this assignment?

- Do you have to use APA format?
- Does the assignment offer an outline/format you **must use** to write the assignment?

How many pages do you need to write to meet the requirements?

What are the formatting and length requirements?

4 Ask questions. ?

Before you start writing, **what questions do you have about this assignment?**

Be honest with yourself. Consider what you **do** and **do not understand**.

Write a list of **what you do not understand** and **determine how to seek assistance**.

- Do you need to ask your instructor for clarification on the assignment question?
- Do you need assistance with APA ?
- Do you need to meet with a CARE Learning Center tutor?

Write any questions you have here:

Remember, to write your assignment effectively, you first need to understand your assignment.



Want to learn more? Work with the CARE Learning Center!



CARE_Learning@pacificoaks.edu



(626) 529-8264



community.pacificoaks.edu/care-lc



Pasadena Campus, Building 45,
Learning Commons, A105