

# Transparent Assignment Template

*A guide for developing & explaining in-class activities and out-of-class assignments*

**Note:** This template is adapted from the University of Las Vegas, Nevada and the [Transparency in Learning and Teaching \(TILT\) Project](#).

**Assignment Name:**

**Due Date:**

## Purpose

**Define the learning objectives** in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Indicate how these are connected with the institutional learning outcomes, and how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives outside of the classroom.

**Skills:** The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills essential to your success in this course/in school/in this field/in your professional life beyond school.

**Note:** Bloom's Taxonomy may help you explain these skills in language students will understand. Listed from cognitively simple to most complex, these skills are:

- *understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools*
- *applying basic disciplinary knowledge/tools to problem-solving in a similar but unfamiliar context*
- *analyzing*
- *synthesizing*
- *judging/evaluating and selecting best solutions*
- *creating/inventing a new interpretation, product, theory*

**Knowledge:** This assignment will help you become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- 1.
- 2.

## Task

**Define what activities the students should do and/or perform.** List steps, guidelines, or a recommended sequence to guide the students' efforts. Specify any potential mistakes to be avoided.

**Note:** Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions can provide inquiry questions to scaffold the inquiry process for your students.

## Criteria for Success

**Define the characteristics of the finished product.** This may be in the form of a checklist that students can use to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts while they work on the assignment, to judge the quality of their work, and to structure peer review activities. Indicate whether this task or product will be graded and, if so, how that will factor into the overall grade for the course.

# Transparent Assignment Template (BLANK)

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**Assignment Name:**

**Due Date:**

**Purpose:**

Skills:

Knowledge:

1.

2.

**Task:**

**Criteria for Success:**

# Transparent Assignment Template Checklist

## *Developing, Explaining, and Discussing Class Activities and Out-of-Class Assignments*

**Note:** This checklist is adapted from the University of Las Vegas, Nevada and the [Transparency in Learning and Teaching \(TILT\) Project](#).

### PURPOSE

#### Skills

- Does your purpose statement specify a **skill or skill set** that students will practice while doing the assignment?
- Does your purpose statement link that particular skill/skill set to examples/contexts where this skill was important in the context of:
  - recent class sessions
  - this part of the course?
  - the whole course?
  - the major?
  - the discipline?
  - your institution's main learning outcomes?
- Does your purpose statement indicate the relevance and/or usefulness of this skill/skill set to the students' lives:
  - beyond the course?
  - beyond the major?
  - Beyond college

#### Knowledge

- Does your purpose statement specify **content knowledge** that students will gain from doing this assignment?
- Does your purpose statement link that particular knowledge to the larger context of
  - recent topics of class sessions?
  - this part of the course?
  - the whole course?
  - the major?
  - the discipline?
  - your institution's main learning outcomes?
- Does your purpose statement indicate the relevance and/or usefulness of this knowledge to the students' lives:
  - beyond the course,
  - beyond the major?
  - beyond college?
- Would this assignment benefit from segmenting it into several assignments, each one focused on a discrete set of skills that should be mastered to insure students' successful completion of the next assignment in the sequence?

## TASK



- Does your assignment identify the very first thing students should do when they begin working on the assignment?
  - The very next thing they should do?
  - The next, etc.
- Does your description of the task help students to avoid wasting their time on unnecessary steps, unproductive time expenditure?
- Does your description help students to focus their time efficiently on producing the highest quality work possible in the time given?
- Would students benefit from some practice exercises (in the form of a pre-task) in class to prepare them to perform the task outside of class on the graded assignment?

## CRITERIA

- Can students use the criteria while they are working on the assignment to determine whether they are completing the assignment efficiently and effectively?
  - Do the criteria take the form of a checklist students can use to evaluate the quality of their efforts while they are working on the assignment?
  - Does the checklist specify characteristics of high quality work for this assignment?
- Can you help students apply the checklist to evaluating some sample work in class, so they understand how each criterion would look in practice?
  - With your guidance, can the students collaboratively annotate several examples of work to indicate where/how the work satisfies the criteria? These annotated examples may then be shared as a reference for students to use while they work on their own assignments.
- Would a rubric (see the [VALUE rubrics](#) as examples) be helpful to students for this assignment?
  - Does the rubric provide an amount of information that helps students at this phase in their learning?
  - Does the rubric provide an overwhelming and counterproductive amount of information for students at this phase in their learning?
- Did you provide examples of good work, annotated to identify exactly where and how this work satisfies your criteria?
  - Can you provide students with examples in class so they and you can test out your criteria checklist or rubric to be sure students know how to apply the criteria to multiple examples of work) and eventually their own work?

# Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions

## Cue Questions Based on Blooms' Taxonomy of Critical Thinking

LOWER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS (BASIC THINKING)	HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS (ABSTRACT THINKING)
<p><b>3. APPLYING</b> (Using learned knowledge in new situations or to solve a real life problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you use ...?</li> <li>• What examples can you find to ...?</li> <li>• How would you solve _____ using what you have learned ...?</li> <li>• How would you organize _____ to show ...?</li> <li>• How would you show your understanding of ...?</li> <li>• What approach would you use to ...?</li> <li>• How would you apply what you learned to develop ...?</li> <li>• What other way would you plan to ...?</li> <li>• What would result if ...?</li> <li>• How can you make use of the facts to ...?</li> <li>• What elements would you choose to change ...?</li> <li>• What facts would you select to show ...?</li> <li>• What questions would you ask in an interview with...?</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. CREATING</b> (Putting ideas together to form a new and different whole)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What changes would you make to solve ...?</li> <li>• How would you improve ...?</li> <li>• What would happen if ...?</li> <li>• How can you elaborate on the reason ...?</li> <li>• What alternative can you propose ...?</li> <li>• How can you invent ...?</li> <li>• How would you adapt _____ to create a different ...?</li> <li>• How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) ...?</li> <li>• What could be done to minimize (maximize) ...?</li> <li>• What way would you design ...?</li> <li>• What could be combined to improve (change) ...?</li> <li>• How would you test or formulate a theory for ...?</li> <li>• What would you predict as the outcome of ...?</li> <li>• How can a model be constructed that would change ...?</li> <li>• What is an original way for the ...?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. UNDERSTANDING</b> (Comprehension; Explaining the meaning of information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you classify the type of ...?</li> <li>• How would you compare ...? contrast ...?</li> <li>• How would you rephrase the meaning ...?</li> <li>• What facts or ideas show ...?</li> <li>• What is the main idea of ...?</li> <li>• Which statements support ...?</li> <li>• How can you explain what is meant ...?</li> <li>• What can you say about ...?</li> <li>• Which is the best answer ...?</li> <li>• How would you summarize ...?</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. EVALUATING</b> (Making judgments about the merits of ideas, materials, or phenomena <u>based on criteria</u>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you agree with the actions? The outcomes?</li> <li>• What is your opinion of ...? (Must explain why)</li> <li>• How would you prove ...? disprove ...?</li> <li>• How can you assess the value or importance of ...?</li> <li>• What would you recommend ...?</li> <li>• How would you rate or evaluate the ...?</li> <li>• What choice would you have made ...?</li> <li>• How would you prioritize ...?</li> <li>• What details would you use to support the view ...?</li> <li>• Why was it better than ...?</li> </ul>
<p><b>1. REMEMBERING INFORMATION</b> (Knowledge; recalling facts and information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is ...?</li> <li>• How is ...?</li> <li>• Where is ...?</li> <li>• When did _____ happen?</li> <li>• How did _____ happen?</li> <li>• How would you explain ...?</li> <li>• How would you describe ...?</li> <li>• What do you recall ...?</li> <li>• How would you show ...?</li> <li>• Who (what) were the main ...?</li> <li>• What are three ...?</li> <li>• What is the definition of...?</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>	<p><b>4. ANALYZING</b> (Breaking down a whole into component parts; Examining critically)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the parts or features of ...?</li> <li>• How is _____ related to ...?</li> <li>• Why do you think ...?</li> <li>• What is the theme ...?</li> <li>• What motive is there ...?</li> <li>• What conclusions can you draw ...?</li> <li>• How would you classify ...?</li> <li>• How can you identify the different parts ...?</li> <li>• What evidence can you find ...?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between ...?</li> <li>• How can you make a distinction between ...?</li> <li>• What is the function of ...?</li> <li>• What ideas justify ...?</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>



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## VALUE Rubric Development Project

The original VALUE initiative in 2007-09 involved teams of faculty and other educational professionals from over 100 higher education institutions engaged over many months to develop 16 VALUE rubrics for the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. Each rubric was developed from the most frequently identified characteristics or criteria of learning for each of the 16 learning outcomes. Drafts of each rubric were then tested by faculty with their own students' work on over 100 college campuses.

### [Download the Rubrics](#)

As part of AAC&U's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative, the VALUE rubrics contribute to the national dialogue on assessment of college student learning. Since the initial release of the rubrics, more than thirty-two thousand first time individuals have visited the VALUE website between June 2010 and January 2014. The VALUE rubrics have been viewed at more than fifty-six hundred discrete institutions, including schools, higher education associations, and more than thirty-three hundred colleges and universities in the United States and around the world.

See the VALUE Project Toolkit page for additional resources and examples of rubric use.

AAC&U acknowledges the generous support from the State Farm Companies Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE).

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