



Palm Beach Atlantic University
Center for Writing Excellence

Understanding the Assignment

Read the assignment and ask your professor about *anything* you don't understand.

Ask yourself:

Why was I assigned this task?

Take note of key verbs: define, explain, illustrate, summarize, compare/contrast, apply, assess, evaluate, synthesize, argue etc. (See Working With Writing Prompts Tip-sheet)

Who is my audience and what kind of writing style is acceptable?

This will affect the tone and level of information of your paper. Do you want to be formal or informal? In-depth or surface-level? Is first person a terrible idea or is it acceptable in this context?

What kind of evidence do I need to support my ideas?

Examples, citations, and facts are some good evidences. Which would be best?

What are the absolute rules of this paper?

Pay attention to style tips (be concise) and technical instructions (font, size, length, etc.).