

## Understanding Assignment Instructions

Instruction	Example Assignment Language	Implied Assignment Goals
<p><b>Base your paper on</b> readings, lectures, or discussions</p>	<p><b>Drawing on ideas in</b> Steven Pinker’s <i>How the Mind Works</i>, <b>examine</b> how our mind and mental abilities have evolved.</p> <p>Based on our readings, class lectures, and discussions on B.F. Skinner, how would you explain . . .</p>	<p>These instructions help you find a <i>context</i> for your writing. They draw on your prior knowledge from the course, and ask you to demonstrate knowledge of the key concepts you’ve learned.</p> <p>Though you’re responding to other sources, you will likely still need to make your own argument/thesis!</p>
<p><b>Make an original argument or thesis</b></p>	<p>In your paper, you should <b>be engaged in original analysis, rather than a summary</b> of our class discussions.</p> <p>I am interested in seeing you think on the page.</p> <p>Propose an original hypothesis in the area of psychology.</p>	<p>While your essay can build on arguments by other authors, it should ultimately diverge in some way from what others have said. Your professor values how <i>you</i> think about the subject and what new ideas <i>you</i> bring to the discussion.</p>
<p><b>Support your argument by analyzing</b> specific techniques, devices (literary, cinematic etc.), factors, or effects</p>	<p>In the film <i>Citizen Kane</i>, analyze how <b>settings, sound, framing, camera angles, and other technical devices</b> emphasize Kane’s isolation.</p> <p>Your project will address racism and its legacy in the U.S. You may want to consider economic implications, social or psychological implications, political implications etc.</p>	<p>The professor’s list includes <i>some</i>, but not all, of the possibilities for your writing. With “other technical devices,” she would ideally like you to brainstorm other areas not mentioned here, and then narrow your focus from among the choices. As you write, focus on <i>how</i> questions rather than <i>what</i>.</p>
<p><b>Define</b></p>	<p>Make sure to <b>define any key terms/concepts</b> you introduce from Pinker’s text, before making your case.</p> <p>You might begin by coming up with a definition of adulthood based on Critical Reading Question 2 on pg. 198.</p>	<p>Your professor will look for your ability to <i>connect</i> key terms to the larger discussion that will follow in your paper, in addition to clarifying relevant definitions.</p>