

# Sample assignment descriptions

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A collection of assignment descriptions from actual USC courses. The assignment descriptions follow best practices in terms of connecting the assignment to the course learning objective(s), providing a narrative overview of the assignment, indicating the steps required to complete the assignment, and referencing how the assignment will be graded.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

After reviewing the sample assignment descriptions, use the CET Assignment Description Template to draft your own assignment descriptions for your course assignments. Edit the template to ensure your assignment description reflects the specifics unique to each of your course assignments. For assistance, contact CET (cet.usc.edu).

### Sample 1

#### Learning Objectives

Present data in appropriate visual formats such as spreadsheets/tables, graphs, and maps. Summarize data to highlight the most important points.

#### Description

During class, you will have 2 hours to complete this Excel assignment. For the first 30 minutes, download a dataset from Blackboard, clean up the dataset in Excel, and do calculations. Answer questions about the calculations and Excel worksheet. Make sure to check your Excel workbook, formulas, and calculations before moving on. Then, for the next 30 minutes, put the cleaned-up dataset in your Excel worksheet into Tableau and decide what kind of chart to make, what colors and titles are appropriate, etc. Next, take about 30 minutes to write a summary for each chart. The summaries should be two or three paragraphs long. Finally, use the last 30 minutes to check your work including making sure there are fewer than eight digits in each paragraph. Upload your Excel workbook, and Tableau file (as a package workbook) that includes your summaries. You are only allowed to submit once. You may refer to your hard copy notes and printout of chapter 2 as a reference but taking time to refer to these resources may slow you down.

#### Steps

1. Download the dataset from Blackboard.
2. Open up an Excel worksheet and save it with the correct file name to indicate it’s an altered file.
3. Read the fact sheet provided by the instructor to find out which calculations to do and what to look for in the data.
4. Setup the basic structure of rows and columns and rename columns to make them user-friendly.
5. Use formulas to make the calculations. If you like, you may use hard copy notes for the formulas and a printout of chapter 2 as a reference.
6. Double and triple-check calculations. Do they make sense? Incorrect calculations will result in an automatic fail.
7. Refer to the fact sheet questions, sort and compare in order to answer the questions.
8. Format the worksheet for Tableau (one row for the header) and save.
9. Download into Tableau, go to the data source section, and select the correct worksheet.
10. Check that the data was imported correctly into Tableau.
11. Refer to the factsheet to determine which 2 points should really be in a story in order to answer the questions.
12. Decide what kind of charts are appropriate to make depending on the research questions and data.
13. Make the 2 charts and save as Tableau package workbook. Not saving as a package workbook will result in an automatic fail.
14. Write summaries for each chart in the title field. You may need to resize your chart.
15. Check everything one last time. Check the Excel workbook. Check Tableau. Check the summaries.
16. Upload the Excel workbook and the Tableau package workbook.

Review the grading rubric for detailed information on scoring.

### Sample 2

#### Learning Objectives

Compare/contrast federal/state arbitration and mediation rules. Analyze professional conduct based on rules pertaining to advertising, marketing, and soliciting.

#### Description/Paper prompt

You are going to start your own mediation or arbitration business in the United States. What ethical considerations must you consider? Write a 7-8-page paper in Harvard Bluebook format that covers whether you will do arbitrations, mediations, or both and what kind, the needed documents, and restrictions on advertising, marketing, and soliciting. Upload the paper to Blackboard by XXXX. This assignment is worth XXXX points.

#### Steps

1. Decide if you want to do arbitrations, mediations, or both, or other (early neutral, discovery, etc.)
   1. If arbitrations, identify which arbitrations you want to do (international, consumer, and commercial)
   2. If mediation, identify what substantive area of law you will go into
2. Describe what forms, checklists, agreements would be needed and where would you get them, or how would you make them.
3. Explain the restrictions on advertising, marketing, and soliciting. Also mention any conflicts.

Consult the provided grading rubric for information on how your instructor will assess your work.

### Sample 3

#### Learning objective

Supports Course Objective 2: Evaluate a music performance

#### Description

You will choose a live performance to attend from the provided list, or view the provided, recorded performance if you are unable to attend a live performance. Evaluate the performance by discussing the repertoire you hear, what was performed, and how it fit in with the music you’re studying. Depending on what you saw and heard, you will need to focus on different elements of importance. It’s recommended to write down in informal journal style notes all the details you remember from the performance as soon as possible after attending/viewing it. You will be using these notes to complete this assignment. The assignment is due XXXX via XXXX

#### Steps

1. Refer to the notes you took during, or directly after, the performance.
2. Analyze the performance by answering: Was it played on modern or early instruments? If modern instruments, what was the stylistic accommodation? and/or Were there voices? What did the singer do to alter his or her voice to make it seem like it was from an earlier time?
3. Continue to analyze the performance by answering: Did it sound like you expected it to sound? If not, why not?
4. Finish your analysis by describing: How did people in the audience respond and behave?
5. Make sure your paper includes an introduction and conclusion.
6. Use the provided grading rubric as a self-check before submitting your paper.

### Sample 4

**Learning objectives:**

* Analyze interdisciplinary readings, peers’ writing, and other sources on art and cultural heritage
* Compare perspectives on historical events and how they are memorialized

This assignment is a critical analysis of a particular type of evidence. Instead of analyzing a paper, students will analyze a video from a selected list. The videos are eyewitness accounts from a massacre. Students should summarize the storyline, analyze the account and their reaction to it, and compare it to a written account of the same event from a different perspective. Students will also prepare a short oral presentation summarizing their paper for the class. The paper should be 5-pages in MLA format, and submitted in hard copy and to Blackboard by XXXX. The oral presentations will be held on XXXX.

**Workflow**

1. Select the video you will analyze from the provided list of choices containing links to the videos.
2. Watch the entire video and take notes.
3. Review notes to make sure they include the storyline: beginning, middle, and end as a brief account of the narrative.
4. After watching the video once, analyze your reaction. It’s possible to have the following reactions:
   1. Select any red flags that might make you doubt their experience. Explain why these moments/elements make you doubt it.
   2. If there are no red flags, and you do not doubt anything about the experience, explain which moments convinced you of this.
5. Relate the video testimony to a class lecture or reading by comparing the written account to the testimony (such as what the text and testimony have in common, how they differ, or comparison of reaction of both).
6. Include both a description of the storyline and your analysis/reaction in the paper.
7. Prepare a 5-minute oral presentation to give the class that includes the same information as the paper, but in brief, and a still frame image from the selected video testimony. You may also include an image from the written account.
8. The paper and presentation will be graded as separate assignments.
9. Review the grading rubric for the paper and presentation as a self-check before submitting and presenting.
10. Submit the paper in hard copy and in Blackboard by XXXX

### Sample 5

**Learning objective:** Create a plan to improve personal leadership skills

As the culminating assignment in this course, you will create a personal leadership plan. To develop your plan, you will need to reflect on your coursework and create SMART goals. You may want to include work related to your Strengthsfinder, Myers Briggs, etc. While these plans are personal and individual, they will be graded objectively on the incorporation of elements from our course, such as making sure goals reference course readings and adhere to the SMART format.

**Steps:**

1. Look back on all your assessments from this class.
2. Identify your strengths. Refer to XXXX assignments in particular.
3. Create at least one SMART goal.
4. Complete the provided leadership plan form.
5. Review the grading rubric for this assignment as a self-check before submitting.
6. Submit on Blackboard by XXXX