

# Getting Started on Your Assignment



Getting started on an assignment is much like getting ready for a trip to a place you haven't been before. First, you'd try to get an understanding of the place by reading information about it (the assignment instructions and the rubric). Next, you'd brainstorm the details of your actual trip, including the timing, how you will arrive, where you will stay, and your focus when you get there. Then, it might be wise to confirm your information and your plan with someone who's been there before (your professor, in this case) to see if it sounds reasonable and feasible. Once you've settled on the details, off you go!

Here is a simple and practical plan to help you get started:

- 1) Read the professor's instructions.
- 2) Re-read the professor's instructions. (It's very common to misinterpret or totally miss an instruction the first time. Has this ever happened to you?)
- 3) Read the Rubric. (Identify areas that are weighted most heavily to help you prioritize your time.)
- 4) Re-read the Rubric. (See reasoning in 2, above.)
- 5) Brainstorm a topic that not only interests you, but also that you (realistically) think is doable in the amount of time you have available.
- 6) If you have any questions, email or meet with your instructor to clear up any uncertainty and to confirm that your topic is appropriate. (Don't be shy. This step can really save you time and angst if you're not confident in your initial direction.)
- 7) Off you go! Some people prefer to begin with an outline and then write their first draft, while others may prefer to jump right in and begin writing. Do whatever works for you. Good luck!