TC 231 Definition and Description Assignment

In this assignment, you will use the skills you have learned about audience analysis, style, and document design. In addition, you will learn how to use library sources to conduct secondary research, define and describe an object or process, and design a poster for a general audience.

Assignment Overview and Topic Selection

You will define and describe an object, process, or mechanism, and then integrate the description into a well-designed poster. The object or process should be technical or scientific in nature, but you will target a general audience, or some subset thereof. You must use at least three library sources (one of which was published within the last three months).

Select a topic that is of interest to you and is currently newsworthy, so that you can locate sources easily. The UW Libraries have several interesting scientific and technical magazines written for general audiences (e.g., Science, Nature, Scientific American, Wired). Keep the topic fairly simple, so that you can address the assignment fully within the space limitations of a poster.

Process

You will produce one final poster for this assignment. However, you will create a draft of the poster that you will bring to a peer review session. The following steps will help you complete this assignment.

1. Select a topic and submit three sources to me for approval; one source must have been published within the last three months. **Due Wed., May 27.**
2. Identify an organizational strategy for presenting information that effectively targets your purpose and audience.
   - For an object or mechanism description, consider a functional or spatial scheme.
   - For a process description, organize steps chronologically and explain causal relationships between steps, as needed.
3. Select graphic elements as needed for each major section.
4. Write your text, and integrate text and graphics into a well-designed poster that presents a clearly-written description of your chosen topic.
5. Produce a print draft of your poster (8-1/2 x 11, 8-1/2 x 14, or 11 x 17) and bring it to a peer review session. **Due Mon., June 1.**
6. Revise your poster based on peer feedback.
7. Submit the finished poster, reduced to one of the specified sizes. **Due Fri., June 5.**

Special Features of this Assignment

Your poster should have a design that helps readers find, understand, and remember the information they are seeking. Remember that this assignment is about describing an object or mechanism OR a process—it is not about writing a set of instructions.
Specifically, your poster should include the following elements.

- A concrete and informative title.
- A definition that is clear and specific—it should catch the reader’s eye.
- A description that includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
  - An introduction that provides general information that readers need in order to understand the more detailed information that follows.
  - A body with appropriate detail: part-by-part (for an object or mechanism) or step-by-step (for a process).
  - A conclusion that summarizes the way in which the parts of the object function together OR how the process works overall.
- Graphic elements that are well chosen and well integrated with the text, and cited appropriately if taken from published documents.
- Reference to at least three scholarly sources (one of which was published in the last three months).

In addition, your poster should have the following characteristics.

- An attractive layout based on the Document Design Guidelines that we have discussed—proximity, alignment, repetition, and contrast—so that the reader can easily understand the relationship among the elements in the poster.
- An effective organizational scheme.
  - For an object or mechanism, a definition of each part and description of its function.
  - For a process, a description of each step—what it is, what its function is, and when, where, or how it occurs.
- Headings and overviews that reveal your organizational scheme.
- Professional tone with clear and concise sentences.
- Correct grammar and punctuation.
- Consistent citation style—italics, quotation marks, etc.
- Contain about 1000 to 1200 words.
## TC 231 Grade Sheet for Definition and Description

### Content: 10 points
Content is complete, accurate, and appropriate for the stated purpose and audience. Depth of analysis is effective, and details are balanced with generalizations.

### Organization: 10 points
Organizational structure suits the purpose and audience. The information is appropriately grouped and ordered; organization is clearly revealed through the use of topic sentences, overviews, headings, and transitions.

### Layout and Illustrations: 10 points
Layout facilitates access and readability through adhering to effective design principles concerning proximity, alignment, repetition, and consistency. Illustrations are designed for easy reading and comprehension; they are integrated into the text both physically and verbally.

### Style, Tone, and Grammar: 10 points
Style is appropriate for the purpose and audience (e.g., passive vs. active voice, sentence length, word choice); tone is effective; and writing is free from grammatical errors (e.g., s/v agreement, pronoun reference). Paper follows American standards for punctuation and usage, and presentation of numerical and bibliographic information conforms to professional standards.

Total points _____________

Grade _____________