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Assignment Sheet: Creating a Website 4-Week Project

For this year's final writing project, you will create a website as a class. In this assignment you will be responsible for four distinct writing projects. By the end of this project you will understand the following:

- How to research and write an informative article about a topic you are interested in.
- How to write catchy and informative headlines.
- How to compose social media writing that is succinct and informative.
- How to format and design various types of writing (including the projects listed already).
- How to collaborate with others to produce individual writing assignments that fit with the larger whole of the class project.

The website project will be completed in four individual parts, each lasting approximately one week.

Week 1: Website Topic and Research Introduction

During the first week the class will pick a topic for the website and a template to use. The instructor will provide a few pre-selected templates for students to vote on as a class. You may choose one of three subjects: **1.** Entertainment Media (such as a video game, movie, or book) **2.** A hobby or skill (such as skateboarding, mountain biking, skiing, or painting) **3.** A historical event (such as the moon landings, the development of cellphones, or the development of Indy cars).

After selecting a topic, the class will discuss sub-topics and page ideas as a group. Each student will be assigned a specific topic to write about for next week. We will then have a 30-minute private writing session where you will write a 100-word summary of everything you know about your assigned topic, or things you would like to know about the topic as you begin your research.

For the rest of the week we will spend time studying professional websites. We will discuss the traits they share and that make them unique. You are expected to take notes about what you like and dislike about each website, what stands out to you, and any interesting details. At the end of the week you will hand in your notes to be graded based on completion. The purpose of this week's assignments are to help you teach you the basics of brainstorming/free writing, writing for a specific goal or purpose (in this case a website topic), and the distinctions between various types of writing and their purposes.

Note: You will NOT be required to build and manage the website; the instructor will be responsible for all technical aspects of the website's development and will input text and adjust design elements either during class or after class.

Unit total: 50 points

Week 2: Research Introduction

During week two you will learn how to research a topic and write an article based on your findings. Your topic will be the same assigned in week 1.

Your research article will include the following: 1. A literature review listing sources you find and a brief summary (~50 words) of the information in each source 2. A final informative article totaling 300 words. This week's lesson plan is designed to teach you the steps of researching and writing an informative essay while also showing the real-world application for something that can seem focused only on the classroom.

Total Points: 250

Week 3: Headlines and Summaries

For week three we will learn about how to create catchy headlines, summaries, and flavor text. We will also learn about effective use of social media and how to write succinct but engaging posts. This part of the project will be collaborative, with students working together in small groups.

The first day of the module we will look at the headlines, titles, summaries, and social media posts from the companies and website we have been studying. The remainder of the week will be spent working in groups to create the following: **1.** Headlines or titles for the informative articles each member of the group wrote in module two, **2.** A Facebook or Twitter post (140 characters maximum) highlighting some aspect of the website that will encourage people to visit, **3**. Splash page text that introduces the website, or a specific aspect of the website (200 words). Work will be hand-written or typed and turned in as a group at the end of the week. This lesson is designed to help you learn how to write collaboratively and reduce broad ideas into succinct and catchy summaries.

Total Points: 200

Week 4: Formatting, Design, and Layout

For the final week we will be learning about text design and layout. Using our example websites, we will look at font choices, website layout, margins, and spacing. The goal for this module is to understand how simple design choice can dramatically change the feel and mood of a piece of writing. You will learn that there is no "best" style in general, but that choices should be based on audience and purpose. Afterwards you will be placed in groups and assigned a specific part of the website to design. Once you have finalized your design choices you will submit a written document listing your choices (approximately 100 words total). The designs will then be implemented into the class website. As a group you will explain and justify your selection to the class. Grades for this part of the module will be based on how well you can justify your choices. At the conclusion of the week the completed website will be shown to other faculty members.

Points: 200

Final grades will be a total of all four weeks work, with extra credit available during the final presentation. Extra credit will be awarded by the faculty judges based on their overall assessment. Extra credit is available as follows:

0 points: A functional website that meets minimum requirements

50 points: A good website that is free of major technical writing issues

100 points: A great website that is informative, attractive, and fun to use

150 points: A standout website where every individual piece is excellent and contributes to the whole

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Written topic proposal	End of week 1	50
Research topic free-write	Monday week 2	50
Literature review	Wednesday week 2	100
Research article	Friday week 2	100
Article titles and headlines	Tuesday week 3	50
Social media post	Wednesday week 3	100
Splash page text	Friday week 3	50
Design choice document	Monday week 4	100
Group design presentation	Wednesday week 4	100
Extra Credit	Friday week 4	Up to 150
TOTAL		700