

MINERALOGY PAPER

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COURSE:

GEOSYSTEMS

(SOIL 300)

SUMMARY

Students complete a written assignment about a mineral or rock of their choice. This assignment can take any written form that the student wishes: research paper, narrative essay, newspaper opinion piece, or poem. The instructor provides students with three specific points that they must address, regardless of the form of the written assignment, along with detailed instructions and assessment criteria.

"This assignment is an opportunity to have students explore things in a way that's interesting to them. I have so much fun reading their papers!"

- George McCourt

GOALS

- Increase students' knowledge of mineralogy
- Teach students to think about how different materials in the earth system are part of our lives
- Allow students to explore alternative ways to communicate scientific ideas beyond the traditional academic paper

STEPS

- ① The instructor provides [detailed guidelines](#) that explain the assignment's purpose, questions to be addressed, writing style options, length, and formatting.
- ② The instructor shares the assessment criteria with students.
- ③ Students must have the specific mineral or rock and the assignment format approved by the instructor before starting the assignment.
- ④ After receiving feedback on the initial submission, students may revise and resubmit the assignment.

ASSESSMENT

The assignment is worth 15% of the final grade, assessed based on the following criteria:

- Content (50%)
- Clarity and organization (30%)
- Spelling and grammar (10%)
- Title page and properly formatted references (10%)

After receiving instructor comments and a grade, students have the option to revise and resubmit their work. The final grade for the assignment is an average of the mark for both submissions.

READY TO TRY IT OUT?

HERE'S SOME ADVICE ...

- Start small. You might limit the assignment format to two or three types (e.g., an opinion piece and a narrative essay).
- Invite students to discuss their choice of topic and format with you before starting the assignment.

BENEFITS

- Multiple format options allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are meaningful and engaging to them.
- Instructors enjoy reading a variety of assignment types.

CHALLENGES

Assessing different assignment formats, such as a poem and an op-ed, may present a challenge. Providing detailed instructions and a rubric helps with assessing fairly and consistently across formats.



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