Purpose/Goals:
This assignment is guided by the following learning outcomes.
- identify and explain the fundamental features of the genres of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama
- define key literary terms/concepts and implement these in oral/written discussion as well as in literary interpretation
- analyze literature and explain how various components of literature work together to create meaning
- recognize and interpret relationships between British literature and its literary history and culture

Because of the open-ended nature of this assignment, many of the learning outcomes for 2120 are covered. Appropriate kinds of questions might involve issues as broad as genre, culture, literary history, or as specific as literary terminology, textual elements, and figures of speech used in a particular passage. Be sure students don’t use these questions to clear up issues of plot. These kinds of confusions can be addressed in other ways and defeat the purpose and goals of the assignment. Students will ask the questions aloud to the class as a prompt for class discussion, which dissuades students from posing plot questions. Also, the public nature of the assignment encourages students to take the assignment seriously.

Description of Assignment:
Once during the course, students will be responsible for bringing two well-considered and well-supported questions regarding the day’s reading as a prompt for class discussion. “Well-supported” doesn’t necessarily mean students know the answer; it means that they have an open-ended question for which the text provides evidence that confirms or contradicts what they think the answer could be. These can be fairly broad questions or ones that focus on a particular passage. Students will be expected to ask them aloud to the class as a whole or in small groups and to hand in a copy of the questions to the instructor.

A full explanation of the support for the questions need not be made explicit by the student; the question itself should lead students’ classmates to examine the support implied by the question. The written part of the assignment turned in to the instructor, therefore, need not be an extensive exploration of the question (although it could be and assessed more heavily).

Requirements:
- Turn in a handwritten or typed copy of the question to instructor
- Ask/read question aloud to class
- No questions regarding plot confusion

Assessment:
This assignment is designed to provide maximum learning impact for students, asking them to demonstrate an understanding of relevant issues in British literature as a whole and/or particular concepts in specific works. At the same time, it is designed to require minimum labor for instructors. They should, therefore, be weighted lightly (10%) relative to other more formal
assignments. Discussion questions could be assessed using a five or ten point scale to relieve
students of the pressure of a “grade.”

English 2120  Sample Assignment 2

English 2120
Writing to Learn
Reading Responses Assignment

Purpose/Goals:
This assignment is guided by the following learning outcomes:
· identify and explain the fundamental features of the genres of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama
· define key literary terms/concepts and implement these in oral/written discussion as well as in literary interpretation
· describe, examine, and evaluate their own reading practices and oral/written critical analyses
· analyze literature and explain how various components of literature work together to create meaning
· recognize and describe literary history as chronological, developmental (moving through time periods), and generic/thematic
· recognize and interpret relationships between British literature and its literary history and culture

Reading responses can be used as journal entries, turned in at various times throughout the semester or individually taken up and assessed. In any case, several should be assigned throughout the semester to monitor students’ interpretive and analytic skills. They also provide a good way to gauge which works resonate with students for future classes.

Description of Assignment:
These are typed, two-page, double-spaced responses to assigned readings of the students’ choosing, due on the day the reading is scheduled. They should turn in several over the course of the semester. This assignment gives them the opportunity to explore their initial reactions to the reading, without having been exposed to class discussion or lecture. They should seize on one (or maybe two) aspects of the reading to write about. Some of these may include theme, setting, characterization, language, meter, etc. The assignment should reflect an extended response to the particular aspect they’ve chosen and should result in a thoughtful, organized response.

This assignment does not call for students to necessarily come to any conclusion about the reading; indeed, it should consist of something that they find interesting, troubling, insightful, confusing, etc. Therefore, a good approach to this assignment is for students to write about something they don’t quite understand or something they have questions about. This paper should illustrate their exploration into the text and should reflect their thought processes in light of that exploration. These papers must include short quotations from the work as evidence for any assertions or as examples for any observations they make regarding the work.

Actively and rigorously discourage plot summaries.

Requirements:
· Two typed pages · Narrow focus · Fully developed ideas
Assessment:
Like the discussion questions, many different assessment tools can be used: point scales, letter and number grades, or pass/fail. Included in this packet is a sample assessment rubric.

English 2120 Sample Assignment 3

English 2120
Collaborative/Group Activity
Chaucer’s “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”

Purpose/Goals:
This assignment is guided by the following learning outcomes:
· identify and explain the fundamental features of the genres of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama
· define key literary terms/concepts and implement these in oral/written discussion as well as in literary interpretation
· analyze literature and explain how various components of literature work together to create meaning
· recognize and interpret relationships between British literature and its literary history and culture

Collaboration and group work can be time-consuming and difficult to work in to a class period, because as lovers of literature, we often have many things we’d like students to get out of the pieces to ensure they find it rewarding. This impulse, however, can be self-defeating. Sometimes it’s more useful to expose students to just one specific idea or two, particularly if you’re dealing with an especially difficult work. Guided group work often lets students see that others have trouble too, and working through a collaborative assignment provides a sense of shared achievement and aids in understanding during class discussion. Below is an example that can be adjusted to accommodate individual instructor’s aims and choices of literature to cover.

Description of Assignment:
1. Ask students to count off to five.
2. Break them up into groups according to their corresponding numbers.
3. Have some of the groups (about half the class) find specific references in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” to auctoritee and to experience.
4. One person from each group should record the group’s references by line numbers on a sheet of paper to be handed in. All group members must sign the paper to receive “in- class” work credit.
5. Ask groups to point out one of their textual references to the class and explain its significance in terms of its relation to the Wife of Bath’s assertions regarding auctoritee and experience. Guide the discussion by asking leading questions about the connections between their points and Chaucer’s characterization of the Wife of Bath, the narrator’s attitude toward her, her place in the ideology of the Middle Ages, etc. (Choose one of two of these to focus on.)

Requirements:
· Responsible, collegial debate

Assessment:
In general, collaborative/group work should be peppered throughout the semester and should be assessed on a participatory basis. In other words, if the student is present and working in a
group, he or she should receive some sort of lightweight credit such as a check or 1-5 points in a participation category. Some instructors use an “in-class work” category in their course requirements. In this model, at the end of the semester the instructor counts how many in class-work assignments the student participated in and assigns a certain number to arrive at the percentage for the category. For example, if there were 10 in-class assignments, grades could be calculated according to the following scale: 10-8=A, 7-6=B, 5-4=C, 3-2=D, 1-0=F.

English 2120  Sample Assignment 4

English 2120
Formal Writing
Oxford English Dictionary Assignment

Purpose/Goals:
This assignment is guided by the following learning outcomes:
· define key literary terms/concepts and implement these in oral/written discussion as well as in literary interpretation
· describe, examine, and evaluate their own reading practices and oral/written critical analyses
· analyze literature and explain how various components of literature work together to create meaning.
· apply writing and revision as tools for understanding literature and its interpretation
Ultimately, this is an exercise in very close reading. Students learn through this assignment the various ways language can function in literature and how manifold denotations and connotations of individual words can effect and change the meaning of sentences in prose, lines in poetry, and potentially entire pieces. Because the Oxford English Dictionary provides all definitions and the etymologies of words, students can learn how language changes over time.

Description of Assignment:
Students can choose 1-5 words to look up in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in one particular work. Students will define the them in their own words, locate the word in the reading exactly (act, scene, line, or page number), and indicate how their expanded knowledge of the word makes the passage in which it appears more clear, more interesting, or adds more depth to the work.

They should be sure to explain how the definition illuminates the work in terms of character, theme, subject-matter, culture, etc. (Hint: Students should be alerted to the possibility of double meanings in the definitions of the words. Very often one word can have different connotations or even denotations, which can shed a very different light on what they’re reading.)

While this assignment may function as a formal writing assignment, it could certainly contain a reflective component, asking students to discuss any changes in their reading and analytic strategies. In this case, students should be encouraged to use a personal writing style (allowing for the first-person “I”), while remaining analytic in their logic and conclusions.

Requirements:
· Instructors could require anywhere from a 1-2 to 4-5 pp. paper depending on the importance and weight they choose to give the assignment.
· Correct MLA style
· Working use of the Oxford English Dictionary.
**Assessment:**

This is a very flexible assignment. Instructors can ask students to write brief analyses of their findings for several words, or they can require short essays on students’ interpretation of works based on their analysis of one word. Consequently, assessment tools can vary widely depending on the importance the instructor chooses to give the assignment.