Dear Murphy Institute Students,

Welcome to a New Year and a New, Spring Semester!

There is often something fresh and electric about beginnings, these new opportunities to learn and stride toward the version of yourself you have envisioned. For a semester, the beginning is also the calmest time. As midterms and final projects are still far away, this is the best time to organize and plan ahead—not only for the next week or two, but for the whole semester.

One approach we suggest is to get an early start on later projects by:

**Analyzing Assignment Prompts**

Analyzing assignments turns intimidating projects into concrete, doable goals

**So, how do we Analyze the Assignment Prompt?**

1. **Step 1:** Read one assignment out-loud, slowly
   - If you read too fast, you risk skipping important words
2. **Step 2:** Circle key terms or concepts you are familiar & unfamiliar with
   - This may include theories, special vocabulary, research methods, types of papers
3. **Step 3:** List questions about the concepts, phrases, or steps for completing the assignment
   - “How do I write a reflection paper?”
   - “What does Gerontology mean?”
   - “How do I find these sources on Urban Education?”
4. **Step 4:** Outline a plan to address these questions and complete the assignment
   - Be as thorough and specific as possible
   - Include how long you believe it will take
   - **Instead of:** “I need to contact my professor and do research”
   - **Write:** “I will email my professor today to confirm my topic (5-10 minutes). After, I will search for at least 6 sources on Urban Education, read the abstracts, and choose the most relevant 3 (15-20 minutes). If I can’t find any, I’ll ask a librarian to help.”
5. **Step 5:** Take the first step today
   - Do you have questions for your professor? Do you have a few minutes to find at least one source? Can you define those terms you don’t know?
   - Whatever the first step is for this assignment, try to do something today to get started

If you have questions or want to put this into practice, feel free to contact me or stop by! 😊

**Sign Up for a One-On-One Tutoring Session**

1. Visit mywco.com/murphyinstitute
2. Register for an account
3. Log in and select the “Murphy Queens Writing Center” calendar.
4. Choose any of the available white rectangles.
5. Fill out the form with your assignment info.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

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