



Team Writing

A Guide to Working in Groups

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SAMPLE TASK SCHEDULE

Deadline	Who	Task	Status
9/04	Amy	Write topic proposal and bring to group meeting	Completed
9/04	Everyone	Review and discuss topic proposal at in-class meeting	Completed
9/06	Amy	Turn in revised topic proposal to instructor	Completed
9/09	Jessica	Bring template with sample layout for manual to meeting	
9/09	Everyone	Discuss and revise template at in-class meeting	
9/12	Bryan	Write instructions for installing motor and arms; e-mail	
9/12	Jessica	Write instructions for assembling base; e-mail	
9/12	Amy	Line up two users for 9/14; prepare all materials for usability tests; e-mail group with status	
9/14	Everyone	Test-drive instructions with users at 3:00 p.m. in the library	
9/14	Amy	E-mail a list of changes to group	
9/17	Bryan and Jessica	Revise instructions; e-mail Amy	
9/19	Amy	Edit manual; prepare overview and table of contents; compile and e-mail completed manual to group	
9/21	Everyone	Group meeting at 3:00 p.m. to review final draft; turn in draft	

TABLE 2.1. Task schedule for a three-person group working on an instruction manual

SAMPLE GROUP CHARTER

Team Charter

Broad Team Goals

1. Clearly communicate the “bottom line” meaning of our results throughout the report.
2. Impress the instructor with the amount of effort we have put into collecting and analyzing our data.

Measurable Team Goals

1. Meet all six of the evaluation criteria listed on the assignment sheet.
2. Meet or beat all deadlines.
3. Obtain data from at least 15 users.
4. Follow all eight guidelines for tables and figures listed in the instructor's PowerPoint presentation.

Personal Goals

- Aaron: Improve management and teamwork skills.
- Bryan: Improve writing skills (be less wordy).
- Yolan: Improve writing skills (improve organization and grammar).
- Mandy: Improve technology skills (especially PowerPoint) and teamwork skills.

Individual Commitment

- Aaron, Yolan, and Mandy are all willing to put in 100 percent effort.
- Bryan would like to put in 100 percent effort but doesn't know whether his job will allow him to commit that much time. He is willing to accept a slightly lower grade if it turns out he cannot keep up.

Other Concerns

- Yolan is worried that her grammar skills may need a lot of work.
- Mandy has done only one PowerPoint presentation before but really wants to improve her tech skills and will work hard to learn.
- Aaron is usually unable to check his e-mail in the evenings and during weekends but will try to check at least twice every school day.
- Bryan is just worried about his job interfering.

Conflict Resolution

If we experience conflict that is not resolved after 30 minutes of respectful discussion of the points, we will present both sides to the instructor and ask him to decide.

Missed Deadlines

If a team member misses a deadline, the project manager will send a “gentle reminder” e-mail. If that team member does not respond within 24 hours, the project manager will contact the instructor, describing the problem. If there is some extenuating circumstance (e.g., personal emergency), the project manager will contact the rest of the team for input on how to proceed.

Unacceptable Work

If a team member turns in work that is clearly unacceptable (e.g., leaves out important information; has major errors; does not meet the assignment criteria; clearly does not meet the team goals of emphasizing the bottom line throughout), other team members should report their concerns to the project manager. The project manager will then contact that team member with a list of concerns and suggest a deadline (usually 48 hours) for when a revised copy of the work is due. If that team member is confused about why the work is unacceptable, that person should seek assistance and e-mail the project manager explaining his or her progress. We want to note that there is no shame in seeking outside assistance!

FIGURE 3.2. Team Charter