Writing Assignment Prompt Checklist
Macalester College Writing Program: Adapted from TILT (January 2026)

PURPOSE	
The prompt:	
	explains the purpose of the assignment: why are the students completing this particular assignment?
	posits the target audience of the assignment.
	connects to the skills practiced, the knowledge gained, and learning outcome(s) of the course (and possibly to the larger discipline and/or professional life after college).

TASK	
The prompt:	
	explains what the student should do.
	introduces and clearly states the content or topic of the assignment.
	includes information about the genre of the assignment: what type of paper is this?
	includes information about the process: how might a student approach and/or start the work for this assignment?

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS	
The prompt:	
	defines the characteristics of a finished assignment.
	explains clearly how the assignment will be evaluated and how it factors into the overall course grade.

READABILITY	
The prompt:	
	has a positive tone.
	is well organized and is easy to follow.

LOGISTICS	
The prompt:	
	includes the title of the course and the name of the professor.
	includes information about citation style, if applicable.
	includes specific information about the generative AI policy for the assignment.
	includes the details: due date, formatting of document, drafts, how to submit, etc.

NOTE: If there's a pedagogical reason for withholding information about how to do the assignment, protect students' confidence and sense of belonging in college with a statement such as: "The purpose of this assignment is for you to struggle and feel confused while you invent and test your own approach for addressing the problem…" (TILT)