Assignments do not exist separately from an entire course. Assignments reach back to content and experiences to which students have been previously exposed. The assignment also sets the stage for future tasks that students will face. It is a rung on a ladder. My main goal for any assignment is for students to apply, and perhaps create, knowledge. I want to be with the students when they perform these higher levels of thinking, so I structure my courses so that most content delivery takes place prior to class, opening up space for active learning during our face-to-face time.

I like assignments that include team work, an opportunity for students to report back, and feedback from either me or their peers. The assignment builds, purposefully, on previous material and provides the necessary scaffolding to move students progressively towards learning outcomes. For example, in a theoretical economics course I ask students to read and reflect on relevant material prior to class. In class, teams of students work on a high-context problem together, while I walk around. Students then present their work on the board, and we discuss results. —Patrik Hultberg Economics