

# portfolio captions

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## WHY?

- People are usually scanning your projects to get a general idea of your skills and the way you work. Don't write a novel, but just share a short paragraph or two that makes your project interesting and relatable to your reader.
- Also when you compose these explanations, you are better able to construct your own narrative as you guide somebody through your work!
- Then **these captions function as helpful reminders when you are interviewing in person**, plus the **important explanations when you have supplied the portfolio electronically**.

## HOW?

**For this course, you will be provided a template**, but it's not an industry-required list. Find your own way to explain your work in the future if you wish, but realize that these are the common questions your explanation *should* answer in some way.

- Write the answers in your own voice and/or tone of your brand positioning. Don't sound like a robot or a student forced to answer an essay question. Perhaps you begin that way, but always revise and refine what you write. **Make time for this – it matters!**

“You and your client might know what they mean, but acronyms and buzzwords only distance your reader. Don't try to impress with lofty language, just share your work in your own voice and be as clear as possible. We should finish reading with a sense of your personality and design process. Whatever you do, don't just copy/paste words about your client's product from their website. The shift in voice will be obvious and will only make you seem lazy.”

- These captions will be displayed on the page previous to the work shown, much like you had to do for your Weekly Assessments but with less self-evaluation and all explanation of client, objective, process, and conclusion.
- **Check your spelling and grammar. ALWAYS.**

For the **CAPTIONS** project, you will be graded on the following:

- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
- **No misspellings.**  
**If any found in either progress or final, you will not receive higher than a C on this project.**
- **No grammatical errors.**  
**If any found in either progress or final, you will not receive higher than a C on this project.**
- Writing skills clearly and intelligently explain each piece.
- Template followed (or some version that still answers all points).
- Packaged files turned in on time as directed.
- Interactive PDFs works correctly.
- Ambition - How much did you challenge yourself? Did you plan your time well?

## CLIENT

Name of client. What client does. Client location.

If you did not do this for a real client, just call this concept work. If there was no client at all, call this personal work.

*Give your reader context and write a quick sentence about what this project or product is all about. This will show your experience and interest in specific types of clients or design work. Naming the location will also help if you want to make it clear you work with clients all over, as opposed to just your hometown.*

## OBJECTIVE (OR GOAL)

What did the client ask you to do? What was the main challenge and measure of success?

Did you have a certain idea or expectation for the project when you began?

If you did not work for a client, what was your objective?

*What objective did you answer with this project?...Were you heightening brand awareness with a specific demographic on a slim budget? Perhaps you were delivering a defined amount of blog posts over a 6-month period. Maybe you were putting together a brand book, or directing a promotional video. **Use 2-3 descriptive sentences to capture the essence of the problem you solved.***

## ROLE

Be transparent about your role in each project. Were you managing a team of designers?

Were you doing the actual design work yourself? If you took a project from concept to finished work, totally on your own, that's something you need to highlight.

*This is especially important if it was a team project. If I just see a list of names without their roles, I might be a little suspicious about what you actually did on this project. But whether or not this was a team project, it's helpful for us to understand what role you played. This could be as simple as listing "art direction & design" beside the project summary. Forgetting this detail is crucial and can mean the difference between getting hired or not.*

**NOTE FROM PROF. NIKKI:** The vast majority of work you will do if employed by an agency or in-house shop will be completed as part of a team. Explaining your role in a larger "machine" is more than just o.k. - it will become expected if you work in this context!

## RESULTS

If this project met the target your client was seeking to hit, then state that.

Add a time frame in which you delivered your objectives, and if the project succeeded beyond expectations, share as much about those results as possible.

*Did you feel proud of the result? Did it exceed your expectations? Did it increase the client's sales by 2000%? Don't get too technical or share some crazy analytics report (and definitely do not make anything up), just include a brief sentence or two that shares how the project was successful. A case study should ideally be a success story.*

***But remember - this must be the truth. Do not tell a story that is fictional!***

## CREDIT (IF APPLICABLE)

If you worked with other people on the project you're featuring, certainly give credit and attribution to others on your project team. Same goes with photography you did not take.

*If it's all yours, then leave this off the caption.*

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\*Paraphrased from [source 1](#) and [source 2](#).

## WATCH THIS VIDEO

Watch this until at least 9:36. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv7aRXmNlg8>



# files due

Work should be completed in InDesign, though the design does not matter yet.  
Name file **YOUR LAST NAME\_Captions**.INDD, and export it as a PDF when finished.

## **ALL WORK MUST HAVE PERFECT SPELLING AND GRAMMER.**

It is **required to have perfect spelling and grammar**, so use something outside of InDesign to check this. Grammarly Premium is highly suggested.  
Other options that are free include [ProWriting Aid](#) and [QuillBot](#).

Include the following for each “piece” approved:

- **Name of the piece.** When captions’ verbiage is applied to your actual portfolio, the name of the piece may be removed if desired.
- One **low-rez screen shot** of at least one item from the full “piece” approved. This is solely for professor to easily reference.
- After this, student may **use the template exactly** with subheads (Client, Objective, etc.) **or write more freely** while still answering all applicable questions.
  - [See portfolios from past semesters](#), as all have captions along with final work.

**Captions are project-level grades like your Process Book(s). Do not take these for granted or your course grade will be affected.**

## **DUE > WHAT • WHEN • WHERE**

*Reminder: **Preliminary Count DUE 8:00am, Monday, March 13** - both A & B.*

*You will receive directions in class about how to complete this.*

*Both A & B meet on this Monday at 8:30 am unless professor has approved otherwise.*

*No class on Wednesday, March 15th.*

Progress of Caption completion due. Should have at least 5 finished.

Name file **YOUR LAST NAME\_Captions** and export it as a PDF after double-checking all grammar and spelling.

- **GROUP A: DUE** in post on Slack channel **#4803\_captions** by **8:00am Monday, April 3.**
- **GROUP B: DUE** in post on Slack channel **#4803\_captions** by **8:00am Wednesday, April 5.**

**Final Captions must be completed by the week of April 17th** so that final portfolio files may be constructed. All students should have complete captions for each of the required 10-12 approved portfolio pieces. *If student does not have the minimum approved by this point in the semester, he/she/they must be in contact with the professor with proof of daily progress.*

Name file **YOUR LAST NAME\_Captions** and export it as a PDF after double-checking all grammar and spelling.

- **ALL STUDENTS: DUE** in post on Slack channel **#4803\_captions** by **8:00am Monday, April 17.**

*Reminder: All students attend both Monday and Wednesday classes starting the week of April 17th until the end of the semester.*