

Major assignment two: Heuristic evaluation option

Assignment rationale

Practitioners do not evaluate interfaces by intuition. They use structured, recognized methods that produce evidence others can examine and act on. This assignment moves you from noticing a principle to evaluating an artifact against defined criteria, using a method technical communicators and UX professionals use today.

Where to start

A heuristic evaluation is an expert inspection. You judge an artifact against criteria you name in advance and report where it holds up and where it fails. Choose your artifact. Strong candidates include a self-checkout kiosk, a patient portal, tax or banking software, an EV charging interface, assembly instructions, or even a game's onboarding or HUD. Confirm you can access it enough to evaluate it thoroughly.

- Start with Moran, K., & Gordon, K. (2023, June 25). How to conduct a heuristic evaluation. Nielsen Norman Group. <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-to-conduct-a-heuristic-evaluation/>
It works through a real evaluation and includes a free fillable workbook.

What is due

Submit a completed heuristic evaluation that:

- Provides a brief summary of the artifact that was evaluated
- Names and cites the heuristic set
- Rates UX/user communication problems with the artifact (tables or bullet points suggested)
- Provides a prioritized list of problems rated on a named/cited scale.
- Provides actionable recommendations to remedy the problems
- Uses APA format for citations

Tips and resources

- Keep a record as you go.
- Recommendations name a change, not a wish. "Increase the font size of the heading" is actionable. "Improve clarity" is not.

Grading Rubric

Criterion	Expectation (Full marks)
Artifact selection (5 points)	An artifact rich enough to surface real issues, and accessible enough to evaluate thoroughly.
Method documented (15 points)	The method is documented well enough to be repeated. For a heuristic evaluation, the heuristic set with its source and the scope inspected. For a usability study, the participants, the tasks as given, and the procedure.
Findings supported by evidence (25 points)	Every finding is specific and tied to evidence a reader could confirm: a screen, a step, an observation, or a participant quote.
Severity rated and cited (10 points)	A severity scale is named, cited, and each level defined. Every finding is rated.
Recommendations (15 points)	Each finding is paired with a specific, actionable recommendation, ordered by severity.
Organization and APA (10 points)	Logically organized headings, findings in a table or well-organized list, and APA used throughout, including the template and any source adapted.
Total possible	80 points