Information Literacy Assignment Checklist

Questions to ask about the assignment:

___ Relate to course SLOs (make sure that the relationship between the assignment purpose and course SLOs is clear and the assignment facilitates the learning of course content)
___ Specify which information literacy learning outcomes the student is responsible for
___ Give guidelines on what are acceptable and unacceptable sources to consult (are there any restrictions on types of websites, are library databases and particularly subject specific databases encouraged or required) Make sure that types of sources such as web sources which include library resources on the web are not ambiguous.
___ Give guidelines on which types of formats they can and cannot use for the assignment (peer-reviewed articles, newspaper articles, popular articles, books, websites, etc.)
___ Require students to use various information sources (databases, websites, etc.) in order to create an information product (paper, speech, brochure, debate, report, etc.)
___ Have a clear set of instructions for the research
___ Specify how the research would be evaluated or measured (Remember that the 5th WASC graduation proficiency is information literacy)

Other Recommended Questions:
___ Is the assignment broken into steps or staggered through the semester with plenty of feedback
___ Does the assignment require students to go through a process of thought, analysis, and synthesis of information rather than recall of facts (Bloom’s Taxonomy—Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation)
___ Does the assignment teach students how research is conducted
___ Does the assignment reflect the subject discipline problems, uses, theories, methodologies, and formats and is it reflective of the type of work students will doing in their future profession
___ Does the assignment discourage plagiarism (for example, require early submission of topic or thesis, outline, bibliography)
___ Is the assignment doable for the student

Effective Assignments:
A good assignment requires students to use a number of information literacy skills. Here’s a breakdown of learning outcomes and possible information literacy assignments/class activities which might be used to fulfill these skills:

___ Standard One: The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.
Corresponding Learning Outcome: Students articulate a research question/thesis/topic

Possible Library activities/assignments to measure this outcome:
Research Log/Portfolio: (Can be used to measure standards one and two)
Give students a worksheet taking them through the search strategy process and reflect on the design of their research strategy. Describe successful and unsuccessful research strategies and/or analyze what they learned in the process of completing the assignment. Have students turn in at the end of the library session. Return to students and have them continue to log their research process through the semester and turn in with their research paper or final class research project.

Help creating a research log:
http://aok.lib.umbc.edu/informationliteracy/assignment3.php
A research log would track search strategy and keywords used, sources consulted and successes and failures.

___Standard Two: Students access needed information effectively and efficiently

Corresponding Learning Outcomes:
Students use a variety of sources and formats appropriate to the research criteria (subject-relevant information sources).
Students use keywords, synonyms, and related words that describe the search and refine it as needed.

Possible library activities/assignments
Research Log: (see above)

Other activities:
Literature review
Review update (select a review written on a topic in the discipline and see how it has changed over a period of time)
Research trends in a discipline
Identifying major sources in a discipline—students develop list of 3 most important databases in their subject area and explain why, list resources found in databases
Understanding the literature of a discipline

___Standard Three: Students analyze and evaluate credibility of sources used (authority, accuracy, relevance, currency, etc.)

Possible library activities/assignments:
CRAAP Test (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose): compare web sources using CRAAP test
Compare free web sources with library sources: After students are given a topic, have them evaluate and compare free web sources such as Google, Wikipedia, Google Scholar to library subject databases. Discuss how sources are put together (Wikipedia vs. subject databases, Wikipedia assignment)

Summative:
Annotated bibliography: students rate top 3 sources (evaluate the 3 that were most significant to the development of their topic and state why)
Other possible information literacy activities/assignments:
Compare primary vs. secondary sources
Compare trade, popular, and scholarly sources

Standard Four: Students apply information from sources to organize, synthesize, and apply information to accomplish a purpose appropriate to the assignment. (organize, synthesize, and apply information and ideas)

Possible library activities/assignments:
Literature review, review update, track research trends in a discipline or profession, understanding the literature of a discipline, tracking an author

Demonstrating organize, synthesis and application of information
Students list how they have used multiple voices and perspectives as well as various viewpoints different from their own.

Standard Five: Students understand many of the legal, ethical, and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology. (plagiarism)

Possible library activities/assignments:
Annotated bibliography

Useful websites on effective information literacy assignments:
Downloadable assignments from St. John’s University Library covering evaluation of web resources, etc.
http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/libraries/services/is/il_assignments.stj

Ideas for assignments for general education courses organized by subject discipline from Utah State University
http://libguides.usu.edu/print_content.php?pid=8762&sid=56474&mode=g

Sample assignments from University of Maryland Library organized by skill level
http://www.umuc.edu/library/libhow/informationliteracy_tutorial_samples.cfm