Questions for analyzing a writing task

Contexts

What is the purpose for the assignment? Why are you giving it to students?

Assignment

How is the assignment conveyed to students? In writing, in class, both?

What terms are used to describe the form of the final product (or its parts)? Are they clear?

What terms are used to describe or allude to the content of the assignment? Are they clear?

Is the purpose of the assignment provided for students?

Is any particular audience specified?

Process

Does the assignment itself specify any process or steps in the process?

How much time do students have to do the entire task?

Are there additional activities you expect students to engage in? How do students know about these activities?
Resources

What resources (prior knowledge of content and form, other texts—the students' own, models, or source materials, peer/instructor feedback, collaborative work, etc.) do students have available to undertake their writing?

Consequences

What consequences does this assignment have for students? (e.g., Who will read it? How does it connect with other writing they will do in school or beyond? How much personal investment do students have in the writing?)

Problems

What problems do you anticipate students having with:

a) understanding the task

b) undertaking the task and producing the final product

What problems do you anticipate in reading, responding to, and evaluating the task?