Decoding a Prompt

1. Context
What central issue, problem, or question does the assignment address?

2. Intent
What does the assignment ask you to do (analyze, explain, summarize, etc.)?

3. Thesis/Theme
What could be an initial thesis or theme for your essay?

4. Audience
What can you assume your audience believes, knows, and values?

5. Genre
What kind of evidence and format does the assignment require?