Imagine a situation in which an instructor of record provides the following assignment:

The rise of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu has brought forth not only a change in the business model for television but a change in the content and aesthetics of television. Television is now being written in a different way because of a new broadcasting paradigm. What other changes in arts and aesthetics have you observed recently? The question you are tasked with answering in a 5-7 page essay is: what is the next evolution in aesthetics?

Given the prompt above, what can you as the teaching assistant do to help your students succeed?

1. Translate the assignment
   a. Make sure you understand the prompt and the assignment expectations from the instructor of record
   b. Close read the prompt in class:
      i. The prompt uses streaming services as its example of a broadcasting shift bringing about a change in television’s aesthetic; take that example further:
      ii. Discuss specific shows such as Stranger Things and Orange is the New Black; how are these shows structured differently than traditional broadcast shows?
      iii. What are the reasons behind these changes?
      iv. What additional changes can we foresee in the future as a result of this shift?

2. Provide sufficient scaffolding for successful essays
   a. Utilize invention exercises to generate ideas
      i. List a number of genres (music, cinema, dance, sculpture) on the board and have students posit recent changes/phenomena in those genres
      ii. Have students posit the causes of those changes
      iii. Have students speculate as to what might flow in the future from these changes
      iv. Assign a reading or two that will either spur or model the kind of thinking you’re aiming for
   b. Provide arrangement exercises on how to construct an argument
      i. Have students generate three potential theses for the assignment
      ii. Contextualize the specific assignment against examples of successful similar arguments (again, through an assigned reading or two) and also against previous assignments in the class (how is this assignment different and/or the same from previous ones?)
   c. Lead revision exercises to polish drafts
      i. Start with a list of common pitfalls
      ii. Have students peer review drafts using the assignment rubric, if available (and if there isn’t an assignment rubric, consider developing one)
Below is an example of a version of this assignment with much of this scaffolding already included:

Writing 150
Arts & Aesthetics – MWF
Writing Project 3

Writing Project 3: The Evolution of Aesthetics
Due: Friday, October 24

Purpose
This assignment will develop your skills in research as well as argument. For Writing Project 2, you were asked to join a present-day conversation. For this assignment, you will use your own research about a particular area of art or within a particular realm of aesthetics to predict some future change. This will require at least a rudimentary grounding in history as well as an understanding of causes and effects.

Reading
Adam Kirsch’s and Mohsin Hamid’s “Are the New ‘Golden Age’ TV Shows the New Novels?”

Premise
Now that you’ve pondered both the value and the moral boundaries of art, you are now tasked with projecting the future of art and/or aesthetics. You may choose to build from our previous considerations (e.g., explaining how the moral boundaries of television will shift with changing societal norms) or you may choose to explore a new issue entirely (e.g., the rise of a particular kind of multimedia content or the fall of a currently robust trend). Alternatively, you may want to examine a burgeoning shift in our conception of beauty.

While the task is to project the future—always an uncertain undertaking—the assignment should not depend primarily on your imagination. Rather, you must show the present-day roots of your proposed evolution and explain how political, social or cultural forces will nurture those roots, ultimately leading to your proposed evolution.

Assignment
Answer the following prompt in a 5-7 page thesis-driven essay:

What is the next evolution in aesthetics?

To answer this question, you should reference several sources (including the assigned reading, if it’s helpful), cited in either MLA or APA format.