

### Government or Legal Document

Five steps with guiding questions to help you understand and analyze the primary source

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| <b>1</b><br><b>Identify the Source</b>           | When and where was this document created?   |
|  | What branch of government or authority created this document?   |
|  | Who wrote the document and what authority does that person or institution have?   |
| <b>2</b><br><b>Place the Source in Context</b>   | Who is the intended audience for this document?   |
|  | What kind of document is it? Legislation, verdict, treaty, proclamation, or something else? How was it distributed?                               |
|  | What's the historical context of this document? What is the background or reason for it?  |
|  | Was the creation of this document an unusual event, or something done regularly?  |
|  | What is the subject of this document? What issue or issues does it address?   |
| <b>3</b><br><b>Analyze the Source Content</b>    | Is this the first document of this type or on this issue?   |
|  | What does this document order, or what does it prohibit, if anything?   |
|  | Does this document have a particular perspective or bias?   |
| <b>4</b><br><b>Assess the Source Perspective</b> | Does this document take sides with one or another political or social party or group with a certain point-of-view?                                |
|  | What type of language is used in this document? Is it administrative or motivational? How do you think people reacted to it?                      |
|  | Do you think this document is an effective one?   |
| <b>5</b><br><b>Evaluate the Source</b>           | Why was this document important to the people or institution who issued it, and why is important now for what it can tell us?                     |
|  | What connections can you make from this document to politics, issues, culture and society, faith and religion, historical change over time, etc.? |
|  | Does comparing this document with other sources, past or present, provide valuable insight?   |
|  | How can you tie this document into key themes, questions, controversies, and debates?   |