

Photograph

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

1 Identify the Source	When was this photograph taken?
	Where was this photograph taken?
	Who took the photograph? Was it taken by an amateur photographer, a professional, or by a satellite?
2 Place the Source in Context	What's the historical context of this photograph?
	What people, objects, or other elements can you identify in the photograph?
	Is there a caption or other notes that provide you with additional data?
3 Analyze the Source Content	Who or what is the subject of this photograph?
	Is the photo of an event, a portrait, or something else?
	Does the photo show something that happened as part of a normal course of events, or was the photo artificially arranged by the photographer?
4 Assess the Source Perspective	If this is a portrait, how does the photographer portray the subject?
	Does the photograph document how something looked, or does it "tell a story" by what it includes?
	If the photograph is "telling a story," what is that story? Is there a particular perspective on the part of the photographer or the subject of the photograph?
	Was the photographer trying to convey or capture a particular mood?
	Is there a particular historical or social background to the photograph?
	How do you think viewers would react to the photograph? Would everyone have the same reaction?
5 Evaluate the Source	Do you think this is an effective photograph?
	Why was this photograph important at the time it was taken, and why is important now for what it can tell us?
	What connections can you make from this photograph to politics, issues, culture and society, faith and religion, and historical change over time?
	Does comparing this photograph with other sources, past or present, provide valuable insight?
	Can you tie this photograph into key themes, questions, controversies, and debates?