

Written Document

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

1 Identify the Source	When was this document created?
	Where was it created?
	Who wrote the document?
2 Place the Source in Context	What was the historical context for this document? Is it associated with an event or movement?
	Who was the intended audience for this document?
	What kind of document is it? How would you categorize it?
	How was this document distributed? Was there one copy made, or many copies?
	Was the creation of this document an unusual event, or something done regularly?
3 Analyze the Source Content	What is the subject of this document? What issue or issues does it address? What information is conveyed?
	What arguments does the author or authors of this document make?
4 Assess the Source Perspective	Does this document have a particular perspective or bias?
	What type of language is used in this document?
	How do you think people at the time reacted to this document?
5 Evaluate the Source	Do you think this document is an effective one?
	Why is this document important? Why was it important to the people or institution who created 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?