



Analyzing a Primary Document

When examining a primary document it is important to analyze and evaluate the information in the document. Use this worksheet to help think about the quality of the information and the motivations and point of view of the author/creator.

Title of Document:

Call number, URL or any other location reference or designation:

Describe the type of Document:

Circle one of the types below if appropriate

- Diary, Memoir
- Film, Video
- Government publication
- Interview
- Letter
- Manuscript
- Memorandum
- Newspaper
- Oral history
- Press release
- Research report
- Speech, Audio recording
- Other

Describe any Unique Physical Qualities:

Circle one of the types below if appropriate

- Letterhead
- Handwritten
- Typed
- Seals
- Notations
- Stamps
- Signatures
- Illustrations

- Maps
- Other

Date of Document:

Author/creator of the Document:

Position, title or situation of author/creator:

For what audience was the document written:

How credible is this document?

Why do you think this document was created?

What purpose does it serve?

What evidence in this document helps you know why it was written?

List three things the document tells you about life when it was created:

1.

2.

3.

List three things you learned from the document that you think are important:

1.

2.

3.

Write a question to the author/creator that is not answered by the document:

How is this document useful to historians?

Do you think there are any biases in the document?

How does this document add to your understanding of the subject?