

How to analyze a primary document

Speeches listened to orally or read are important parts of history. A historian can learn a lot about a situation from what is said and what is also not said by a famous man or woman of history. By looking at a speech or letter in an analytical way many new truths can be found. History is skewed by those who write it. A true understanding of events can be made by any educated person.

Regardless of the choice of Primary Document, all students are going to be judged on the following criteria:

- All Primary Documents must be typed in MLA format with works consulted and in-text citations. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted
 - All sections of the primary document must be properly addressed according to the directions found below (Numerical and Alphabetical)
 - Students must incorporate research support from the preselected supplemental articles. Supplemental articles can be found by following the following path: www.westmifflinmoritz.com> Extra Sources>Honors Projects/Directions>Primary Document Support>Unit>Document
 - Students must underline or highlight support material in their typed copy
 - Material found within the primary document or class notes *cannot* be used as material for citing. The only acceptable material for a citation grade will be the supplemental articles.
1. Who is the author? The presenter or writer of a letter or speech tells a lot about what the document will be addressing. Every person, famous or not, sees their situation as the righteous or correct path. You must look at the predisposition of the writer and the prejudice of the listener.
 - a. What was the profession of the author?
 - b. Why did the author create the speech/document? **Support with details**
 2. When was it written or created? Sometimes when history is studied, people tend to place the entire story in front of them and forget that certain events have not happened, or the event has not been fully realized. Making a time line of the events that have happened, and then a timeline of events that occurred after the document helps the reader understand the importance of the speech or letter.
 - a. When was it written or created?
 - b. What are the circumstances surrounding the document? **Support with details**
 3. Who was the intended audience? The audience of a speech or document can tell a lot about why the document was created in the first place.
 - a. Why was the document/speech specifically intended for this audience? **Support with details**
 - b. Why was it directed to this person or group?
 - c. What reactions if any did the author intend to incite? **Support with details**
 - d. What was the bias of the receiver of the document/speech? **Support with details**

4. Effects. Many things can be said and not said in a primary document. We all know that sometimes things are communicated without having to say a word. That is the power of the document, essentially why we study the document.
 - a. What was the short term effect after the document? *Support with details*
 - b. Did the document have any influence on the history that followed it (Long term effect)? *Support with details*

5. Reflection. This is your opinion. Just like watching a movie, listening to music, observing art, or anything that elicits emotion; you have an opinion.
 - a. What is your opinion of the document? This is open ended. *Support with details*

PRIMARY DOCUMENT RUBRIC

<u>1 Who is the author?</u>	
Identified and answered 1a. Profession of author	/1
Identified and answered 1 b.	/1
Provided multiple sentence response for 1b.	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material	/1
Support material improves argument, not restate facts	/1
	/5
<u>2. When was it given?</u>	
Identified and answered 2a. Creation time	/1
Identified 1 example of circumstances surrounding PDoc	/1
Identified at least 2 examples of circumstances surrounding PDoc	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material	/1
Support material improves argument, not restate facts	/1
	/5
<u>3. Who is it written for?</u>	
Identified and answered 3a/b Who and why	/1
Explained and supported reactions for 3c.	/1
Explained and supported bias for 3d.	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material	/1
Support material improves argument, not restate facts	/1
	/5
<u>4. Impact of document</u>	
Identified and answered 4a. Short term impact	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material for 4a	/1
Identified and answered 4b. Long term impact	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material for 4b	/1
Support material improves argument, not restate facts	/1
	/5
<u>5 Reflection</u>	
Student provides at least 1 paragraph of reflection	/2
Student provides 2 or more paragraphs of reflection	/1
Provided additional information from supplemental material	/1
Support material improves argument, not restate facts	/1
	/5
Annotations (See attached rubric)	/20
In-Text Citations and Works Consulted (See attached rubric)	/20
TOTAL SCORE	/65