

# What Does It Mean?

The questions below will help you analyze your primary sources. Feel free to use them on every source and pick and choose which ones are relevant depending on the source.

1. What is it? (Photograph, art, government record, etc.)
2. Does it have a title or any other writing to indicate more about it?
3. What stands out visually about the primary source (if anything)? Are there any unusual images, doodle, or handwritten marks?
4. Who created it? What is the creator's background?
5. When and where was it created?
6. How was it created? (Think about material) Is it unique or one of many of its kind?
7. What major events, themes, or peoples distinguish the era or period in which the source was created? What was its context?
8. What is the purpose of this source and who was the intended audience?
9. How might the intended audience affect the reliability of the source? Can you identify any bias this source might display? How trustworthy is the source?
10. Has the source been altered or edited in any way? If so, when and by whom?
11. How does the primary source contribute to our understanding of history?
12. What can this source tell us about the particular event/person/place/topic under study?
13. What is missing from this source? Who or what is left out?
14. What other primary sources might corroborate or refute this document's interpretation? Where can you look for additional, related sources?
15. How does this primary source relate to other sources you've already discovered or learned about?