

HISTORY Signature Writing Assignment

Step 1: View the Power Point Lesson for the ["Overview for Primary Source Documents" provided by the Library of Congress](#)  which describes primary and secondary sources. This step is VITAL!

Step 2: After viewing the lesson, pick out a primary source that you find interesting. **For the purpose of this course, students are required to pick out a letter, speech, or diary entry. Use one (1) single artifact rather than a collection of artifacts. The primary source must be something that is covered in this course.** For HIST 1301, this can be anything from Christopher Columbus to the Civil War/Reconstruction. For HIST 1302, this can be anything after the Civil War up to the last chapter that is covered in the book.

In addition, students must use a secondary source that backs up or provides information to clarify information in the primary source. An example of this would be if a student chooses a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, a secondary source that gives information about who James Madison was and a little bit of background information about him would meet the requirements. One secondary source is required, but students can use more than one. Please see the information after the Power Point about Primary and Secondary sources to find out more information about finding a Primary Source. Primary sources can be found using the sources provided on the following page.

Step 3: After a primary source and secondary source(s) is chosen, students can begin to write the paper by answering the 10 questions below. The finished product should be a formal paper that is 3 pages MINIMUM (750 words) written in essay style, NOT in a numbered list (minimal work will get a minimal grade). Reviews are to be doubled-spaced in Microsoft Word format utilizing MLA format and must include in-page citations. Reviews should be composed in Times New Roman 12 point font.

Taking into consideration the information presented in the Overview of Primary Source Documents lesson: Address the following points in your review:

1. Who wrote the document? Until you know this you know little about the document. Sometimes you can figure this out from the document itself. Was the author a political or private individual? Was he educated or not?
2. Who was the intended audience/who was the letter or speech written to? This will tell you about the author's use of language and the knowledge that he assumed on the part of the reader.
3. What is the story line? What is going on in the document?
4. Why was the document written? Everything is written for a reason. Is it just a random note, or a scholarly thesis?
5. What type of document is this, or what is its purpose? A newspaper article is different than a diary. Thus, one can expect to extract different kinds of information from different kinds of documents. A private letter to a friend is very different from a political letter written to discuss governmental matters.
6. What are the basic assumptions made by the author? For example, did the author assume that the reader could understand certain foreign or engineering terms?
7. Can you believe this document? Is it reliable? Is it likely? This should be more than a yes or no answer. What makes it believable or not?
8. What can you learn about the society that produced this document? All documents reveal information about the people who produced them. It is embedded in the language and assumptions of the text. Your task is to learn how to "read," or analyze, a document to extract information about a society. You might wish to analyze each document in terms of various aspects of a society (economic, political, religion, social structure, culture, etc.).
9. What is the importance of this document to history? Everything can be considered important even if it is not important for political or governmental purposes. Does it shed light on what life was like during the time period it was written? Does it demonstrate views of the world from a time long ago? Etc.
10. Finally, What does this document mean to you? If you answer nothing, you will lose a whole letter grade. You are the one picking out the sources, so pick something that you find interesting that means something to you. Tell me why it means something to you and why you picked it.

Step 4: Submit the assignment through Canvas. Do not send the assignment via email. Submit your

Signature Assignment paper in MICROSOFT WORD format. Please understand that all papers WILL be checked for plagiarism before grading.