

Primary Source Analysis Assignment

DUE NOV 16

Students will choose one primary document (not already assigned in class) from American history to the end of the Civil War and write a 2-3 page analysis of that source. (That means **AT LEAST** two whole pages double-spaced, 12-point font).

You will have a cover page with your name, date, class, and title of your primary source (see the sample attached). Your essay must be a polished piece of writing. It will be graded it for both content and style.

You may select any source you wish **but you must get approval of your TA before completing the assignment.** Keep in mind that primary sources can come in many forms. They can be maps, diaries, letters, memoirs, newspaper articles, government documents, posters, pamphlets, photographs, advertisements, paintings, novels, songs. BE CREATIVE! **(Your document must have been written **before** 1865)

What is a primary source analysis?

The purpose of this assignment is to analyze your source as *deeply and as thoroughly* as possible. Do not simply provide a general summary or overview of your source. Think concretely and *critically* about its content, its historical context, the cultural values that shape it, and its relevance to your research. What are the author's tone, style, and argument? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Read between the lines to discover its perspective.

Your analysis should comprise of the following elements.

1. Your reading of the primary source. Not just a summary of what the document says but why it is significant. Think about who wrote it and why? (Why is this document historically significant?)
2. A discussion of context. What event or events does this document address? How does it enrich our understanding of larger events?

To help you understand what this assignment is asking, I have attached a sample from one of my World History classes. Your finished essay should look like the sample.

Where and when do I turn it in?

Once you have completed the assignment, upload the finished document to UBlearns. You can find this under the Assignments tab on the left side menu. **No late submissions will be accepted.**

Places to look for primary sources:

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/voices/voices.cfm> and

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/search.php>

(These are general document archives. They cover a variety of topics. Just search for what you want)

<http://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>

(The primary source reader from the recommended textbook. There are plenty of documents here that I did not assign).

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/>

(Library of Congress Digital Collections has documents on a wide array of American history. This include some images and films as well)

<https://eena-alexanderstreet-com.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/>

(Collection of sources from the 17th and 18th century)

http://find.galegroup.com.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/sas/start.do?prodId=SAS&userGroupName=sunybuff_main

(Documents relating to all aspects of slavery)