

Primary sources are sources created in the historical period being researched and by historical actors themselves. (Contrast this with secondary sources, which are after-the-fact scholarly analyses of the past.) For this assignment, you will choose a primary sources that we have discussed in class bring to class, and complete a three plus page paper analyzing the significance of this source. All writing in this class must be in 12-point font with normal and must include in-text citations. The purpose of this assignment is to work on how to analyze a primary source. Your goal is to analyze your source excerpt 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 historical 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 biases and assumptions. Depending on the nature of the primary source you select, the source may be as short as a paragraph or two or as long as dozens of pages.

In structuring your Primary Source Analysis Essay, you must address the following questions. Do not simply list answers to the questions below. Rather, you must write your paper in essay form. It should have an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You do not need to address the questions in order, but be sure that you address all questions that are relevant to your source in your essay. Your essay must be a polished piece of writing. I will grade it for both content and style.

Basic Identification

1. What type of source is it? (newspaper article, map, letter, film, etc.)
2. When was it created?
3. Where was it created?
4. Who created it?

Author's Intent

1. What is the author's place in society? (profession, status, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
2. How might the factors listed in the question above shape the author's perspective in this source?
3. Why do you think the author created this source?
4. Does the author have an argument? If so, what is it?
5. Who is the intended audience for this source?
6. How might the intended audience shape the perspective of this source?

Historical Context

1. Under what specific historical circumstances was this source created?
2. What larger historical events, processes, or structures might have influenced this text?
3. Is this source consistent with what you know about the historical record from that time?

Content of the Source

1. What historical facts do you learn from this source?
2. What biases or other cultural factors might have shaped the message of this source?
3. How do the ideas and values in the source differ from the ideas and values of our time?
4. What historical perspectives are left out of this source?
5. What questions are left unanswered by this source?

Relevance of the Source

1. What research question are you using this source to answer?
2. How might this source confirm or contradict issues raised in other primary sources?
3. How might this source confirm or contradict issues raised in secondary sources?
4. Does this source represent any patterns with other primary sources?
5. What does this source tell you about the history of everyday life in modern South or East Asia?