

Primary Source Worksheet

What kind of source is it? What is the medium? (ex. written diary, oil painting, etc.)

Who created this source?

When did they create it?

Is this the original source (ex. are you holding the physical diary itself)? If not, what are the filters it passed through to reach you, the reader? (ex. selectively quoted in an article, printed in a book, etc.)

What is the basic message or content of this source?

Who is their intended audience(s)?

Did the author have any reasons for creating it? If so, what were those reasons?

What is the potential bias of the author and what are the stakes for them in authoring the source?

If the author is describing something, how far removed are they from the events or information they are describing? Are they reliable?

What is the context in which it was created? What else was happening at the time/place it was created that might be important to know?

What's missing from the source? Did the creator leave out anything important?

How does this source compare to other primary sources from that period/place or related to the same topic?

How does this source relate to secondary sources (books, articles, etc.) about this topic? Does it support or undermine arguments you've read?

What questions does this source raise? What would you need to know more about?