

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

FOUR STEP PROCESS IN ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT:

1. **ORIGIN**- What is the origin of the primary source document? Is it a oration like The Gettysburg Address? Is it a letter from one person to another? Is it a picture from some seminal event? Be sure to also put the approximate date and relative location of the document.
2. **PURPOSE**- For what reason was the document generated? What was the author attempting to accomplish? What was the motivation for the document?
3. **VALUE**- What is the relative value of the document? If you are working on a thesis and position, how does the document either support or contradict your thesis? What is the value added to the position from the document?
4. **LIMIT**- What are the limitations to the document? Is the author bias or subjective in his/her assessment of the situation? Does the author's motivation discount the relative validity of the document? What might be missing from the document that would enhance its value?