

“H-A-P-P-Y”

AP World History

A Guide to the Sourcing and Analysis of Documents

Sourcing a document examines the historical situation, audience, point of view, and purpose of the text or image in order to gain a better understanding of its use and limitations in your argument or claim.

Historical Situation—Intended Audience—Point of View—Purpose—WHY the sourcing affects your use of the document.



It is recommended that students analyze documents through an acronym used for sourcing and analysis: **HAPPY**. 😊 This stands for Historical Situation (H), Intended Audience (A), Point of View (POV) (P), Purpose (P), and the ability to analyze the significance of the document or WHY the document is relevant to your thesis argument (Y). Typically historical primary and secondary sources on a DBQ will identify the author, the date, and the occasion for the document. These introductory facts are followed by the document itself. After reading any document, you should be able to summarize your analysis of many of the questions asked below in one sentence. Correctly sourcing at least THREE different documents will earn you a full point on the DBQ essay. You are permitted unlimited attempts to earn this point, so you should attempt to source EVERY document in the DBQ. You can attempt sourcing a specific document more than once but three *different* documents must be correctly sourced to earn the point.

REMEMBER it is not IDENTIFYING the answer to these questions that earns a point but knowing HOW this makes a difference in your argument that is required.

HISTORICAL SITUATION

- When and where was the document produced?
- How does the historical context that the source was produced in affect the reliability of a source?
- What contemporaneous events might have affected the author's viewpoint and/or message?
- Who wrote the document, and what is his/her relationship to the historical event being addressed?
- What was the author's position in society and what status did that position hold in the specified period and location in history?

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Who was the source created for? Why does that matter?
- How might the audience have affected the content of the source?
- How might the audience have affected the reliability of the source?

POINT OF VIEW

- What was the author's point of view and does this point of view support or undermine the explicit purpose of the source?
- How can we tell, if at all, what other beliefs the author might have held?
- How might this point of view have affected the reliability of the source?

PURPOSE

- Why did the author create this source and how does that affect the reliability of the source in relation to your argument?
- Why was the document created at the specific moment in history that it was? Why not sooner? Why not later?
- Why has this document survived to the this day? Why has it been included in this collection of documents?

ANALYSIS (WHY IS THIS RELEVANT TO YOUR ARGUMENT)

- What about the above sourcing makes a difference to how you use this document to support your argument?
- Do we know anything about the above sourcing that would affect the reliability of the document in your argument?
- Does the above sourcing add additional meaning to what the source explicitly states?
- Are there limitations to the knowledge that the source provides that affects how you use the source in your argument? What does this source NOT tell you?