**Questions to consider when reading a document.**

Primary source documents allow you to get closer to the subject matter. To get the most out of a document, you must examine who wrote it, why, the intended audience, motives or intentions, and what information is being presented. This guide will help you sort through any number of primary source documents.

**GENERAL TOPICS WHEN EXAMINING A DOCUMENT**

When reviewing a document consider each of the following. To assist your understanding, take notes on each of the following topics.

**Before you read the document:**

1. Identify the author:
   1. Do you know anything about the author? Background information?
   2. Does he/she have an affiliation with a group, political party, newspaper, or other organization?
2. Type of document and source:
   1. Is it from a newspaper or magazine? Special interest group?
   2. Diary or letter?
   3. Why was it saved if it was not a published document?
3. Intended audience:
   1. Was it written for a public audience? A specific group?
   2. Is it personal, or for a few people?
   3. How do you know who it is for?

**While and after you read the document:**

1. Information presented:
   1. List any important facts gained from the document.
   2. Does the author have firsthand or secondhand knowledge of the information being presented?
2. Intent of document:
   1. What does the author hope to do with this document? Inform? Argue? Persuade?
   2. What phrases or words used convince you of his/her intent?
   3. What bias appears in the document? Can you identify where this bias comes from?

Finding Bias Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. List any important facts gained from the document.

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2. Does the author have firsthand or secondhand knowledge of the information being presented?

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3. What does the author hope to do with this document? Inform? Argue? Persuade?

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4. What phrases or words used convince you of his/her intent?

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5. What bias appears in the document? Can you identify where this bias comes from?

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