

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS EXERCISE – H.A.P.P.Y.

Analysis of primary sources **differs from description** in that when one describes a source, one provides only a summary of its content; when one analyzes a source, one thinks critically about not only the content of a source but also who the author and presumed audience of the source were, why a source was produced, and what factors influenced the production of that source. All of these factors contribute to the usefulness of the source for a historian in answering particular historical questions.

– *The College Board*

Historical context:

- *What events shaped/triggered the document?*
- *What other events were taking place at this time?*
- *Describe the political, intellectual, social and economic environment of the time.*

Audience:

- *For whom, specifically, generally, and logically, was the document intended?*
- *What details in the document help you determine the audience?*

Purpose:

- *Why was the document created?*
- *What elements of the document help you determine the purpose?*
- *How does the author's POV and/or the document's format shape the purpose?*

Point of view:

- *Who, specifically, generally, and logically, produced the document?*
- *What are the references, direct and inferred, to the author's POV (i.e. professional, racial, gender, social background) in the document?*
- *What details reflect the author's POV?*

whY is it important:

- *Does the document reflect **continuity**, or **change over time**? What details tell you this?*
- *How does it impact/reflect contemporary and/or current opinions on the topic?*
- *What are the limitations (is it credible?) of the document?*