

Source analysis

PERSPECTIVE

- Do you recognise the creator's name?
- Using your understanding of who made the source and why, consider the position or perspective of the source.
- Does it represent a particular country's position? A class position? A political party's position?
- What is the creator's point of view?

RELIABILITY

- Was the creator a participant?
- What was his/her role?
- Were they an expert? Do they hold a position that gives them understanding?
- Due to their position, is bias likely?
- How do you know? Consider the use of emotive language; is the information presented one-sided?
- Is the source complete or incomplete?
- In what ways is the source limited? Does it lack clarity, detail, understanding? Is it from a narrow point of view?
- In what ways is it biased? Is it propaganda or not?
- Do other sources corroborate or support it, or not?
- Do other sources contradict it or not?
- For what purposes is the source reliable? For what is it unreliable?
- Was it private – a diary entry or personal letter?
- Was it meant for publication? How do you know?
- Was it intended for an individual, small group of experts, or a wide audience?

USEFULNESS

- What does the source tell you? How can you use what the source tells you to explain some aspects of the past?
- Remember, usefulness is different from reliability and depends on reliability. Reliability must be determined first.
- A source is almost always useful in some way, what needs to be determined is what it can tell us