

# ***THE PROCESS OF HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION***

## **Part A: Research**

1. Create an Investigative Question
2. Seek Information from Primary and Secondary Sources

## **Part B: Analyze Evidence**

### STEPS 1-5: ANALYZING AN INDIVIDUAL SOURCE:

#### 1. LITERAL SOURCE QUESTIONING

*What are the literal (observable, factual) aspects of the document?*

#### 2. LOOKING FOR POINT OF VIEW & PERSPECTIVE

*What is the point of view of the source?*

#### 3. LOOKING AT THE CONTEXT

*How did historical circumstances shape the source?*

#### 4. UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCE

*What does the source say, or show? What does that mean?*

#### 5. ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SOURCE

*What can be learned from this piece of evidence?*

### STEP 5: WORKING WITH MULTIPLE SOURCES

#### 6. CORROBORATION

*How do different pieces of evidence compare?*

## **Part C: Making an Interpretation**

1. Construct an Explanation about History
2. Seek Peer Review

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## Part A: Research

1. Create an Investigative Question
2. Seek Information from Primary and Secondary Sources

## Part B: Analyze Evidence

Individual Sources

1. LITERAL SOURCE QUESTIONING
  - *What type of document is this? (poetry, diary, government document)*
  - *What is the setting? (time and place)*
  - *Who wrote the document? Did the recorder have firsthand knowledge of the event? Or, did the recorder report what others saw and heard?*
  - *Was the information recorded during the event, immediately after the event, or after some lapse of time?*
2. LOOKING FOR POINT OF VIEW & PERSPECTIVE
  - *What religion, sex, and social class is the author? What is the author's social position?*
  - *What "loaded" words or strong descriptive words are used? (clues to perspective)*
  - *What is the intent of the author? How might the author be biased?*
  - *What is omitted?*
  - *How credible is the source?*
  - *Overall: What perspective or point of view on the topic is presented?*
3. LOOKING AT THE CONTEXT
  - *Who is the intended audience?*
  - *What else is going on at this time that might have affected this source's content?*
  - *What ideas were present in the predominant culture of the time?*
  - *How might the context (previous questions in this step) have affected the content of the source?*
4. UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCE
  - *What does it say? What does it show?*
  - *What is the main idea/argument/message?*
  - *What evidence/details does the author provide?*
  - *What meaning can you draw from the source? How would you summarize the main ideas?*
5. ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SOURCE
  - *What can we learn from the point of view of the source?*
  - *What does this source reveal about the time/place?*
  - *What questions does the source answer about my topic or the leading question?*
  - *What questions are left unanswered?*
6. CORROBORATION
  - *Are there other sources to support or disagree with this source?*
  - *What's the same? What's different? What are the reasons for the similarities and differences?*
  - *Do sources acknowledge counter evidence?*
  - *Was anything omitted?*

## Part C: Making an Interpretation

1. Construct an Explanation about History
  - *Rank evidence: Which sources will I choose to help me with my topic or leading question? Why?*
  - *How many pieces of evidence do I need?*
  - *How will I create an answer to my question that incorporates and accounts for conflicting evidence?*
2. Seek Peer Review
  - *Is my explanation convincing?*
  - *Does my explanation have support from several pieces of evidence?*
  - *Does my explanation reflect the multiple perspectives of the event or era?*
  - *Is my explanation clearly written or demonstrated in my final product?*

Multiple Sources