

SOURCING: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Sourcing is an important part of being a historian. Source is the act of understanding who wrote a document, where they wrote it, and why they wrote it, for the purposes of analysis or interpretation. Without properly understanding an author's purpose and perspective, it's difficult to properly interpret a document. This activity will help you become familiar with the different categories you'll use to source documents.

Process

1. Review the categories and questions that make up the Sourcing Tool. One way to remember what to think about when sourcing is by using the acronym HAPPY.

HAPPY Categories	Questions
Historical context	• What about the author's location may have influenced the source's location (for example, the location's geography, demography, or the region's political situation, religious influences, or industry)? • What events might have influenced the source's creation? • What other information helps you understand this source?
Audience	• Who was the source created for (that is, was this written for anyone to read or was it private, for one specific person or group)? • What were the readers of this source supposed to do or think once they read it?
Purpose	• What was the author's goal, and what evidence supports your answer?
POV (point of view)	• Can you identify anything about the author that might explain why they wrote this? For example, does their economic class, occupation, religion, nationality, political group, ethnic group, or gender help explain why they wrote this?
WhY (importance)	• What is the main idea of the source? • What parts of this document are most valuable and why? • What are the limitations of this document? In other words, where does it fall short?

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- Read the documents in [Sourcing: Campus Lunch Policy Change](#) to learn more about a controversial new policy in Anytown, USA. Your teacher will either have you read all four documents yourself or read one and work with a group.
- Determine which document is the best fit for each of the first four sourcing categories of HAPPY. (You'll address the **WHY** when you're more familiar with sourcing!) You can only choose one document for each category. Be prepared to defend your answer!

Category	Document that is best fit for this category (write document #)	Explain your answer
Historical context		
Audience		
Purpose		
POV (point of view)		