

As historians it is necessary to examine written sources in great detail. The table below will help you to examine written sources by providing you with the questions you need to consider.

**Note – this table is a guide**

Key focus areas	Questions to ask	Answers
Origin	What is the source? Who created it? Who is the author? When was it created? When and where was it published? Is it a primary or secondary source?	
Audience	For whom was the source made? (intended audience) Was it meant for publication?	
Content	What information can we gain from the source? What does the writer want you to know?	
Purpose	Why does the document exist? Why did the author create this piece of work? What is their motive?	
Reliability	Is the source complete/ incomplete? In what way is it limited (does it lack detail or point of view)? Is it biased? Is it propaganda? Do other sources support or contradict it or not? For what is the source reliable? For what is it unreliable?	
Usefulness	What does the source tell you? How can you use what the source tells you to explain some aspects of the past?	
Authenticity	Can we establish the source as genuine? Has the source be verified and by whom? How do we know we can trust the source?	

Tip to remember the key focus areas – OACPRUA

**Old And Cranky People Rarely Undress Anywhere**