

Hands-on with Primary Sources & Archives Activity

EXAMINE Observe the item without secondary context	REFLECT Use contextual information to situate the item in a place and time
• What are you looking at? Describe the item(s) • Who is the creator of the item(s)? • What year was the item or created? • What does the item document? • What stands out to you about the item(s)?	• What can you say about the creator(s)? • What was happening during the time period the item was created? Was it created at the time of an event or later? • What questions might you have about the item that the item itself cannot answer?
INFER Use your observations and contextual information to interpret the item and develop your research strategy	
• What message is the creator trying to get across? • Who is the intended audience for the item(s)? • What is the significance of the item(s)? • Was the item meant to be private or shared publicly? • What bias is being expressed in the item? • Are there any silences/gaps noticeable in your item? • How does this additional contextual information change or inform your understanding of your time? • Did you connect with the item(s) in any way? • Approach the item from a different critical lens - how does this inform your interpretation of the item and its significance?	
RESEARCH STRATEGY What additional resources will help you learn more about your item or your thesis?	
• How did your experience with the item differ from your expectations? • Did the item inform your original research query? • What additional resources (primary or secondary) could you consult to learn more about your item? • How has this research process differed from research you've done before? What's similar? • Sometimes primary research doesn't turn out to be relevant to our research. If this is the case, find another item/collection/resource that could be more relevant.	

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Online Archive of California

Indexes finding aids listed by hundreds
of institutions around the state



Calisphere

Digitized primary sources from the UC
Libraries and other California
Institutions



UCLA Digital Library

Gateway to Digital Content from the UCLA
Library



LOC Digital Collections

Digitized collection material held by
the Library of Congress

