Source Analysis

**The Basics**
- Highlight key points
- Draw arrows to/circle key points
- Annotate or make small notes
- Discuss with others (where appropriate)
- Think about what type of source it is
- Think about the author of the source
- Think about why it was created
- Avoid the word ‘biased’ use ‘one-sided’
- Answer the question!
- Always back-up your points using the source - i.e. a quote
- **Use the information provided**

**Inference**
- Ignore anything in the source that doesn’t relate to the question
- Describe what the ‘surface’ information says…
- Keep it simple and to the point
- Can you ‘put two things from the source together’ to deduce something further?
- Is there a message ‘between the lines’?
- Does it tell you further things about the author or the situation?
- Include 3 inferences

**Compare/Contrast** (differences)
- How does the content differ?
- Look first for OBVIOUS surface differences of fact, but then study the words/details to deduce differences in approach, emphasis or tone.
- Why do the sources are differ?
- Compare who wrote them, in what situation, and the motives/intentions/purpose of the author.
- Make sure you come to a conclusion based on facts/inferences/interpretations in the sources…

**Reliability**
- Primary sources (from the time) are immediate and even eyewitness, but they may lack perspective/objectivity/may be one-sided.
- Secondary sources (written afterwards, e.g. textbooks) can be dispassionate and use a number of primary sources, but they may be guilty of misinterpreting facts.
- Sometimes the question may ask you about the ‘validity’ this = accuracy!
- Test the info/claim of the source against other sources and your knowledge
- Look at the origin of the source to establish context & purpose
- Does it tell the whole story or miss info out?
- Be specific...use the source.
- Come to a conclusion based on facts.

**Utility**
- Nothing is ever useless; even the most one-sided source full of lies reveals what that author thought.
- Talk most about the ways in which the source is useful.
- How much information is it telling you, is it trustworthy? (useful sources tell you lots and are trustworthy)
- Don’t use the word ‘reliable’ here, use ‘trustworthy’
- Look at what the source is telling you and compare it to what you need to know
- An inaccurate source is useful in revealing an author’s opinions BUT not facts
- Compare the source’s strengths and limitations and come to a conclusion

**Judgment**
- Recount relevant surface/inferred information from the sources.
- Realise that the sources support both sides of the argument, and that you can use the sources and your own knowledge to argue both for and against.
- Weigh the evidence to come down one way or the other, OR state case and prove it, discounting contrary evidence
- Refer to the content and utility (content/accuracy and reliability) of the sources.
- Use the essay plan provided in revision pack!
- Come to a conclusion - make a judgment…
**What** type of source is it — nature

**Who** produced it — origins

**When** was it produced — origins

**Where** was it produced — origins

**Why** was it produced — purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of source</th>
<th>Nature (some possible points to make)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diaries</td>
<td>Give a day to day eyewitness view but only one view and if to be published can have an ulterior motive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoirs</td>
<td>Views of someone who experienced the event and enable person to be detached and reflect on the event. But may be coloured by hindsight. [Note: Be careful about generalised statements about memory loss. If important event unlikely to have been forgotten.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Reflect view of the time, often of the government but may be one-sided and generally for propaganda purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Can give accurate details. However might be selective and taken for a purpose. Can give a distorted view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>Can reflect a popular view of the time of a person or event - an 'in joke'. However, may be an exaggerated even distorted view of the event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>Often well researched. However biographer often strongly in favour of or against the subject of the biography.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Possible purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who produced the source?</td>
<td>Is there the name of an individual or an organisation? What are you told about who produced the source? Is the person in a position to be particularly knowledgeable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Was the source produced by someone who was there at the time, or was it produced later? What are the advantages and disadvantages of eyewitness accounts? Remember eyewitnesses can get things wrong or get a limited view. Try to avoid generalised statements such as 'Eyewitness accounts are always more useful/reliable than those written later' Someone writing later could have more opportunity to check out the facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where? Under what circumstances</td>
<td>Was the source produced in a context in which the person could give their own views? Was the person forced to follow the government view? For example many First and Second World War sources were produced under strict government censorship. They are still useful as an example of a censored view of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of source</td>
<td>Possible purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>Because the speaker wants people to do something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverts</td>
<td>Usually intended to persuade people to buy something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>For propaganda purposes - to get you to support a certain view or turn you against the other side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>To give a particular view of an event. Purpose may be to give an accurate record. But it could also be to give a narrow or particularly dramatic and even distorted view of an event. Purpose may be to inform or to impress or possibly to get your support or turn you against an event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>To turn you against a person or event by ridicule and exaggeration, or to persuade you to support an idea or campaign.</td>
</tr>
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