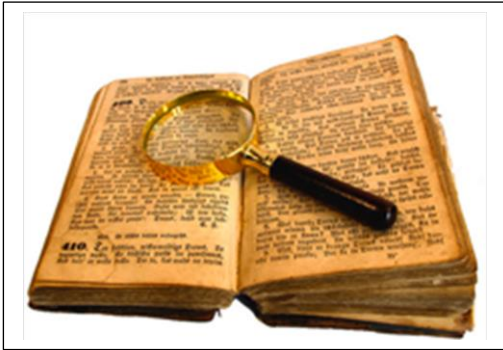


Aim #2a: How do we “read” various historical sources?




NYS SS Framework: Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking



Mini Lecture

- Robin W. Winks, in *The Historian As Detective*, makes the analogy between the works of two professions- the historian and the detective
- It is something students of history need to make as we “do history”
- Just as historians become detectives as they work with clues from the past, students should learn to
 - **examine evidence**
 - **question its relevance**
 - **asses its validity**
 - **then formulate hypotheses which they test further**
 - Often these answers are challenged by others as they interpret the evidence & arrive at conflicting interpretations
- Being a **historical detective** is challenging, engaging, exciting work!
- When reading primary sources such as the Laws of Hammurabi, try to think of every line as evidence. Assume that you are a historian who knows very little about Mesopotamia and that this document falls into your hands. Your job is to use this document as evidence to support some conclusions about Babylonian civilization. You should already have the historical context to help you understand how the evidence in this source can be used.
- Think of questions as you read the source. These can keep you focused on how words, lines, and sections of the source might be used as evidence. A general question to keep in mind is, “what does this tell me about this civilization, about how people behaved,
- Read a secondary source not as historical evidence (as you would read a primary source), but as a set of conclusions- an interpretation of the evidence from primary sources- by a scholar (usually a historian). Your job is to try to understand what the writer’s interpretation is, evaluate whether any arguments or evidence the writer presents seems to support it adequately, and decide in what ways you agree or disagree with the interpretation.
- Try to think of questions as your read a secondary source. This process can keep you alert to why the author selects and presents only certain information and what conclusions the author is trying to convey to the reader. Perhaps the two most important questions to keep in mind are “what question is the author trying to answer” and “what does all of what the author has written add up to?”
- Try to look at visual sources as if they were written, primary documents. As with primary documents, assume that you are a historian who knows very little about that place/time. Your goal is to try to “read” it as evidence to support some conclusions about that civilization.
- Without some guidance, “reading” a visual source as historical evidence is more difficult than using a written source. The reproduction makes the details harder to see and most people are not used to looking at a picture in this analytical way.
- As with primary documents, think of questions as you look at the visual source. The general question to keep in mind is, “what does this tell me about this civilization, and how people behaved, how they thought, or what they believed?” Also, what information the artist might have been attempting to convey to the viewer.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE ASK OF THE PAST? THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN				
 CAUSE AND EFFECT	 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY	 TURNING POINTS	 USING THE PAST	 THROUGH THEIR EYES
What were the causes of past events? What were the effects? • Who or what made change happen? • Who supported change? • Who did not support change? • Which effects were intended? • Which effects were accidental? • How did events affect people's lives, community, and the world?	What has changed? What has remained the same? • Who has benefited from this change? • Who has not benefited? And why?	How did past decisions or actions affect future choices? • How did decisions or actions narrow or eliminate choices for people? • How did decisions or actions significantly transform people's lives?	How does the past help us make sense of the present? • How is the past similar to the present? • How is the past different from the present? • What can we learn from the past?	How did people in the past view their world? • How did their worldview affect their choices and actions? • What values, skills and forms of knowledge did people need to succeed?

Resources/Documents:

- *Code of Hammurabi*
- *The Agricultural Revolution*

Sourcing

Before reading/viewing a Source
ask yourself:

- **Who** wrote/made it? P.O.V. → **Bias**
- **When** was it written/made?
(**Historical Context**)
- **Where** was it written/made?
(**Geographic Context**)
- **Why** was it written/made?
(**Purpose or Agenda**)
- **For whom** was it written/made?
(**Audience**)
- Is it reliable? How?
- Is it useful? How?

*All these questions/answers influence the creation of the source.

How to Analyze a Document

- H= Historical Context
- A= Audience
- P= Purpose
- P= Point of View
- Y= Why



- Year? What was happening at the time document was written?
- For whom was the document created, & how might this affect the reliability or accuracy of document?
- WHY or FOR WHAT REASON was the source produced? What was the author's GOAL in writing it?
- Identify an important aspect of WHO the author is, an influence that shaped the author or source, & explain HOW specifically this might have impacted what they wrote (document's content)?
- Why does this document help you answer your question? How does the document impact/shape/reflect popular arguments on the subject? What are the limitations of the document?

How does point of view affect history?

point of view: an opinion, or claim

A person's point of view can be shaped by life experience and motives, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, ideas, gender, and other factors.

CONFUSION CAUTION:

In English class, point of view refers to who the narrator is in a story. Historians use the term differently. In History class, an author's point of view is their opinion about a specific topic.

Directions: Read the situation described below and respond to the questions that follow and then share with your partner and write their responses.

Imagine that you are the principal of a school and you just found out that there was a fight in the lunchroom. You've asked many students and teachers who **witnessed** the fight about what they saw so you can evaluate who caused the fight. Unfortunately, you have received many **different accounts** that **disagree** about who started the fight, who was involved, and when it started.

1. Why would there be different accounts of the fight?
2. Who should the principal interview to try and figure out what happened during the fight and who started it?
3. What questions would you ask interviewees if you were the principal?

Directions: The statements from Justin and Max are their personal histories of the lunchroom fight. Answer the questions below that are based on the definition of history above.

The principal soon found out that the two boys who were fighting were named Justin and Max. He spoke to both of them. Here were their responses:

Justin: "That kid started it. Max. I was just standing in line waiting to pay for my food, and he shoved me super hard. And, like, for no reason. He just freaked out on me. I don't even know the kid, and he's been weird to me ever since I started going to this school. He and his friends glare at me in English class for no reason."

Max: "That kid is psycho. He turned around and punched me out of nowhere. Me and my friends were standing in line just joking around, and he turned around and punched me for no reason. He's messed up and creepy. Ask anyone."

1. History is an account of the past constructed from evidence. What evidence did Justin and Max use to construct their histories of the lunchroom fight?

Justin and Max used what they saw and felt from their points of view.

2. How are Justin and Max's histories of the lunchroom fight different?

Each history blames the other person for starting the fight.

3. How did Justin and Max's points of view affect their histories?

Justin thought Max was picking on him, so he was justified in punching Max, while Max thought that he and his friends were just joking around, so there was no reason for Justin's reaction.

What practices do historians use to examine sources?

Vocabulary

annotate: Historians underline and take notes on sources to help them keep track of their thoughts as they read.

audience: the person or group of people that a message is for

author: person or group who created a source

close read: Historians close read to figure out the author's point of view by examining their evidence and claims.

purpose: why something was created

source (v.): Historians ask questions about the origins of a source to understand the author's point of view and why they have it.

CONFUSION CAUTION:

The word "source" is used to identify a historical document AND the process used to identify who created it and when, where, and why it was created.

So, you source (verb) a source (noun).

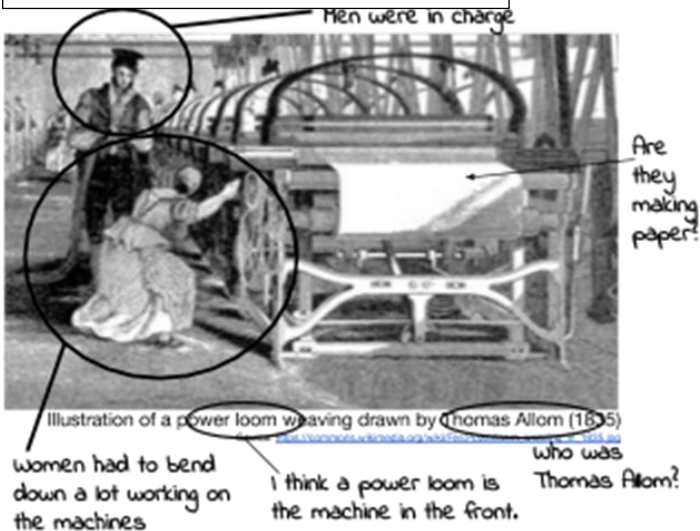
Example: Matilda sourced the historical source by identifying that it was created in 1910 by the President of the United States.

Annotate

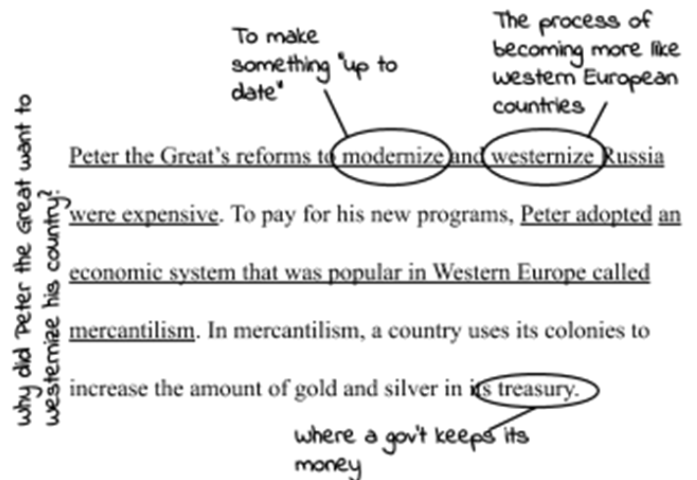
The act of using symbols and notes to show what you are thinking while you read.

When you annotate, you interact with the source by underlining sections of the text, circling words, phrases, or images, and writing notes to yourself in the margins.

Example annotation of an image:



Example annotation of an text:



Source

The act of determining *who* created a document, *when* the document was created, *where* it was created and *why* it was created

Historians **source** a document to help them figure out the author's point of view and why they might have it. To source, historians ask themselves these questions whenever they investigate a source:

Who wrote this?	What do we know about the author ?	When was it written?	Where was it written?
What type of source is this?	Who was the intended audience ?	Why was it written? What was the author's purpose ?	What is the author's point of view ?

Sourcing Practice; Directions: Examine the documents below and answer the questions that follow.

This is another account of the lunchroom fight from the introduction to this lesson. Max wrote this account because the principal asked all witnesses to write down what they saw.

Max: "That kid is psycho. He turned around and punched me out of nowhere. Me and my friends were standing in line just joking around, and he turned around and punched me for no reason. He's messed up and creepy. Ask anyone."

1. **Who** wrote this? What do you know about the **author**?
2. **Why** was it written? What was the **author's purpose**?
3. What is the **point of view** of the author concerning why the lunchroom fight happened?

Close Read

The act of reading a source to identify **the author's claim(s) or point of view and how they are making it**

When close reading, we try to answer questions like:

What **claims** does the author make?

What **evidence** does the author use?

What **language** (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?

How does the document's **language** indicate the author's **point of view**?

Close Reading Practice Directions: Read the passage below, then answer the close reading questions on the right.

Home-cooked food is healthier than fast food. According to a recent study by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, fast food burgers have on average 71 calories per ounce compared to homemade burgers that contains 67 calories per ounce. That means that a fast food quarter pound burger (4 oz.), has sixteen more calories than the same burger made at home. Those added calories could lead to weight gain, which can be bad for one's health. In addition, in a 2005 study, Dr. Harold Haines states "people who eat fast food meals more than twice a week gain about 9.92 pounds and are more likely to get diabetes than people who eat home cooked meals (2)." The more fast food you eat, the more overweight you will be, and the more likely it is that you will have health problems like heart disease, or diabetes which can prevent you from living an enjoyable and long life with your loved ones.

1. What claim does the author make about home-cooked food?
2. What evidence does the author use to support his/her claim?
3. In addition to evidence, how does the author try to persuade the reader in lines 13 through 17?

Close Read & Sourcing Practice

Directions: Read the statement below from Max's mother , then use it to source, & close read.

1	Max's mother: "Max would never start a fight. He's the sweetest boy. I know he's had a hard time lately with me and his dad losing our jobs, but he still would never start a fight with anyone. He's a mentor to the younger boys and helps out at church. You can ask anyone in this town."
2	
3	
4	
5	

Source: Answer each of the following questions based on the information provided above.

1a. Who wrote this? What do we know about the author?

1b. Why was it written?

3. Close Read: From this author's (Max's mother) point of view why did the lunchroom fight happen? Why does the author believe that?

What is context? How do historians use it to understand and write about the past?

Vocabulary

contextualize: the act of describing where an event took place, what led to it, and why

geographic context: where a historical event took place and why it took place there; includes location, location relative to other places, geographic features, and climate

historical circumstances: the events that led to an event; includes the time period and larger historical trends as well as causes

historical context: the events that led to an event; includes the time period and larger historical trends as well as causes

Directions: With the information you have gathered, contextualize the lunchroom fight by answering the questions below, then combining them into one response.

Event: *The Lunchroom Fight*

Who?

individuals, groups of people, regions, nations involved

Max and Justin, a new kid at school

When?

date, year, era, "before __," "after __"

During lunch

Where?

continents, regions, countries, geographic features nearby, describe the geography if relevant

In the lunchroom

How?

describe the process that took place

Max and his friends were fooling around in line and pushed Max (either on purpose or accidentally), then Justin punched Max

Why?

use words and phrases like "led to," because, and so to show connections between events and to explain why

There has been tension between the two boys because Justin's father was brought into town to reorganize the business that Max's parents work for. Both of Max's parents lost their jobs, so he has been under a lot of stress and has directed some of his frustration towards Justin.

Combined Contextualization:

Why did it happen **when** and **where** it happened?

Combine your responses from above to contextualize the event.

Max and Justin got into a fight in the lunchroom when Max and his friends pushed Justin and he fought back, but there are more reasons for their fight. Justin's father was brought into the business where Max's parents worked to reorganize the business and as a result, Max's parents were fired. Since then, Max has been frustrated and has been taking it out on Justin.

Historical vs. Geographic Context

We can divide context into **historical circumstances** and **geography**, though the two types of context are almost always related one another. These two types of context demonstrate that to **Contextualize** an event you must **Connect Cause and Effect** and **Think Like a Geographer**.

Historical Circumstances (Historical Context)	Geography (Geographic Context)
the events that led to an event; includes the time period and larger historical trends as well as causes	where a historical event took place and why it took place there; includes location, location relative to other places, geographic features, and climate
When did it happen?	Where did it happen?
What time period was it? What were the characteristics of that time period? What led to it?	What geographic features were nearby? How did those features affect how it happened?
Who was involved? What were those people like? Why were they involved?	What political region did it take place in? What regions were nearby? What was the relationship between those regions?

Practice: Historical vs. Geographic Context

Directions: Identify which sections of the passage refer to historical circumstances and which refer to geographic context by annotating the passage below.

The fight between Justin and Max was caused by factors inside and outside the school. For the last few years, our community has gone through major changes. The factory that employs many in our community is under new management because the company, which is based London, is not selling as many products to China as the used to. Justin's father is one of the new managers in the plant and because of the changes in the factory, Max's parents were let go from their jobs last month. Max and his friends started bullying Justin soon after, possibly as a result of Max's parents losing their positions. Justin has not made many friends since moving here so he has not had anyone to help him cope with the bullying or to distract him from it. The fight broke out during lunch after Max insulted and shoved Justin and Justin threw a punch.

The Laws of Hammurabi

Headnote: Much information about the peoples of Mesopotamia comes from compilations of laws, prescriptions, and decisions that were written as early as the 23rd century BCE. The best known of these are the Laws of Hammurabi (aka Code of Hammurabi), issued by an 18th century Babylonian king who probably used older Sumerian and Akkadian laws. The laws refer to almost all aspects of life in Babylonia. The following selections are taken from this code, which originally had about 282 articles and included a lengthy prologue and epilogue.

Consider:

- The principles of justice reflected by these laws
 - the social divisions in Babylonian society disclosed in these laws
- the political and economic characteristics of Babylonia revealed in this document

- 1: If a seignior (man) accused another seignior and brought a charge of murder against him, but has not proved it, his accuser shall be put to death.
- 3: If a seignior came forward with false testimony in a case, and has not proved the word which he spoke, if that case was a case involving life, that seignior shall be put to death.
- 4: If he came forwards with false testimony concerning grain or money; he shall bear the penalty of that case.
- 6: If a seignior stole the property of church or state, that seignior shall be put to death; also the one who received the stolen goods from his hands shall be put to death.
- 17: If a seignior caught a fugitive male or female slave in the open and has taken him to his owner, the owner of the slave shall pay him two shekels of silver.
- 18: If that slave will not name his owner, he shall take him to the palace in order that his record may be investigated, and they shall return him to his owner.
- 19: If he has kept that slave in his house and later the slave has been found in his possession, that seignior shall be put to death.
- 22: If a seignior committed robbery and has been caught, that seignior shall be put to death.
- 23: If the robber has not been caught, the robbed seignior shall set forth the particulars regarding his lost property in the presence of god, and the city and governor, in whose territory and district the robbery was committed, shall make good to him his lost property.
- 48: If a debt is outstanding against a seignior and Adad has inundated his field or a flood has ravaged it or through lack of water grain has not been produced in the field, he shall not make any return of grain to his creditor in that year; he shall cancel his contract-tablet and he shall pay no interest for that year.
- 53: If a seignior was too lazy to make (the dike of) his field strong and not make his dike strong and a break has opened up in his dike and he has accordingly let the water ravage the farmland, the seignior in whose dike the break was opened shall make good the grain that he let get destroyed.
- 54: If he is not able to make good the grain, they shall sell him and his goods, and the farmers whose grain the water carried off shall divide the proceeds.
- 141: If a seignior's wife, who was living in the house of the seignior, has made up her mind to leave in order that she may engage in business, thus neglecting her house and humiliating her husband, they shall prove it against her; and if her husband has then decided on her divorce, he may divorce her, with nothing to be given her as her divorce-settlement upon her departure. If her husband has not decided on her divorce, her husband may marry another woman, with the former woman living in the house of her husband like a maidservant.
- 142: If a woman so hated her husband that she has declared, "you may not have me," her record shall be investigated at her city council, and if she was careful and was not at fault, even though her husband has been going out and disparaging her greatly, that woman, without incurring any blame at all, may take her dowry and go off to her father's house.
- 195: If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.
- 196: If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye.
- 197: If he has broken another seignior's bone, they shall break his bone.
- 198: If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.
- 199: If he has destroyed the eye of a seignior's slave or broken the bone of a seignior's slave, he shall pay one-half his value.

The Agricultural Revolution

Source: Robert J. Braidwood, "The Agricultural Revolution," in C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, ed., *Hunters, Farmers, and Civilizations: Old World Archeology*. Copyright 1979 by W.H. Freeman and Company.

Headnote: Human beings populated parts of the earth for thousands of years before the first civilizations arose 5,000 or 6,000 years ago. The causes for this relatively rapid transformation in the condition of human beings have been interpreted in a variety of ways. However, most historians and anthropologists point to the agricultural revolution of the Neolithic Age, in which-through the domestication of plants and animals- human beings became food producers rather than hunters and food gatherers, as the central development in this transformation to civilization. In the following section, Robert J. Braidwood, an archeologist and anthropologist, analyzes the agricultural revolution, its spread, and its significance.

Consider:

- The origins or causes of the agricultural revolution
- Braidwood's rejection of environmental determinism and his acceptance of cultural differentiation and specialization
- Connections between agriculture and the beginnings of cities

Tool-making was initiated by *pre-sapiens* man. The first comparable achievement of our species was the agricultural revolution. No doubt a small human population could have persisted on the sustenance secured by the hunting and food-gathering technology that had been handed down and slowly improved upon over the 500 to 1,000 millennia of pre-human and *pre-sapiens* experience. With the domestication of plants and animals, however, vast new dimensions for cultural evolution suddenly became possible. The achievement of an effective food-producing technology may not have predetermined subsequent developments, but they followed swiftly: the first urban societies in a few thousand years and contemporary industrial civilization in less than 10,000 years.

The first successful experiment in food production took place in southwestern Asia, on the hilly flanks of the "fertile crescent." Later experiments in agriculture occurred (possibly independently) in China and (certainly independently) in the New World. The multiple occurrence of the agricultural revolution suggests that it was a highly probable outcome of the prior cultural evolution of mankind and a peculiar combination of environmental circumstances. It is in the record of culture, therefore, that the origin of agriculture must be sought.

Not long ago the proponents of environmental determinism argued that the agricultural revolution was a response to the great changes in climate which accompanied the retreat of the last glaciation about 10,000 years ago. However, the climate had altered in equally dramatic fashion on other occasions in the past 75,000 years, and the potentially domesticable plants and animals were surely available to the bands of food-gatherers who lived in southwestern Asia and similar habitats in various parts of the globe. Moreover, recent studies have revealed that the climate did not change radically where farming began in the hills that flank the fertile crescent. Environmental determinists have also argued from the "theory of propinquity" that the isolation of men along with appropriate plants and animals in desert oases started the process of domestication.

In my opinion there is no need to complicate the story with extraneous "causes." The food-producing revolution seems to have occurred as the culmination of the ever increasing cultural differentiation and specialization of human communities. Around 8000 B.C. the inhabitants of the hills around the fertile crescent had come to know their habitat so well that they were beginning to domesticate the plants and animals they had been collecting and hunting. At slightly later times human cultures reached the

corresponding level in Central America and perhaps in the Andes, in southeastern Asia and in China. From these "nuclear" zones cultural diffusion spread the new way of life to the rest of the world.

As the agricultural revolution began to spread, the trend toward ever increasing specialization of the intensified food-collecting way of life began to reverse itself. The new techniques were capable of wide application, given suitable adaptation, in diverse environments. Archaeological remains at Hassuna, a site near the Tigris River somewhat later than Jarmo, show that the people were exchanging ideas on the manufacture of pottery and of flint and obsidian projectile points with people in the region of the Amouq in Syro-Cilicia. The basic elements of the food-producing complex-wheat, barley, sheep, goats and probably cattle-in this period moved west beyond the bounds of their native habitat to occupy the whole eastern end of the Mediterranean. They also traveled as far east as Anau, east of the Caspian Sea. Localized cultural differences still existed, but people were adopting and adapting more and more cultural traits from other areas. Eventually the new way of life traveled to the Aegean and beyond into Europe, moving slowly up such great river valley systems as the Dnieper, the Danube and the Rhone, as well as along the coasts. The intensified food-gatherers of Europe accepted the new way of life, but, as V Gordon Childe has pointed out, they "were not slavish imitators: they adapted the gifts from the East ... into a new and organic whole capable of developing on its own original lines." Among other things, the Europeans appear to have domesticated rye and oats that were first imported to the European continent as weed plants contaminating the seed

of wheat and barley. In the comparable diffusion of agriculture from Central America, some of the peoples to the north appear to have rejected the new ways, at least temporarily.

By about 5000 B.C. the village-farming way of life seems to have been fingering down the valleys toward the alluvial bottom lands of the Tigris and Euphrates. Robert M. Adams believes that there may have been people living in the lowlands who were expert in collecting food from the rivers. They would have taken up the idea of farming from people who came down from the higher areas. In the bottom lands a very different climate, seasonal flooding of the land and small-scale irrigation led agriculture through a significant new technological transformation. By about 4000 B.C. the people of southern Mesopotamia had achieved such increases in productivity that their farms were beginning to support an urban civilization. The ancient site at Ubaid is typical of this period.

Thus in 3,000 or 4,000 years the life of man had changed more radically than in all of the preceding 250,000 years. Before the agricultural revolution most men must have spent their waking moments seeking their next meal, except when they could gorge following a great kill. As man learned to produce food, instead of gathering, hunting, or collecting it, and to store it in the grain bin and on the hoof, he was compelled as well as enabled to settle in larger communities. With human energy released for a whole spectrum of new activities, there came the development of specialized nonagricultural crafts. It is no accident that such innovations as the discovery of the basic mechanical principles, weaving, the plow, the wheel and metallurgy soon appeared.

