**Analyzing a Primary Source**

Here is an outline of how to approach the analysis of primary sources.

* Think of primary sources as something that was doing something in the past, performing an act, making something happen. Ask: What was the text doing? In other words: what work was it doing in the past, what was its author trying to achieve?
* Then consider
  + Sourcing
    - Who or what is the document’s author and how and why was it created?
  + Context
    - Situation: What was the situation in which this document was created (time; place; in response to what events)?
    - Medium: What sort of document is this (written, visual (artwork, photograph), audio/video recording)?
    - Type of text: what sort of literary or document form does this document take? Is it correspondence (letters), a report, a law, a novel, a non-fiction book, an oral history, etc?
* Then do:
  + Close Reading. Read the document carefully, paying attention to:
    - Intent
    - Significant words
    - Basic message
    - Audience
  + Corroboration
    - Compare what the document says with what we know from other sources.