

**For this assignment, you are required to create a 1-2 minute audio file on 1 primary source found in the source section of the writing assignment you choose for your first essay.**

**You can record your audio file directly in Canvas or using your own audio tools submit a file through Canvas.**

**NOTE this is one of the rare assignments that will be submitted in Canvas instead of GL.**

### **Background:**

When you analyze a primary source, you are undertaking the most important job of the historian. There is no better way to understand events in the past than by examining the sources — whether journals, newspaper articles, letters, court case records, novels, artworks, music or autobiographies — that people from that period left behind.

Each historian, including you, will approach a source with a different set of experiences and skills, and will therefore interpret the document differently. Remember that there is no one right interpretation. However, if you do not do a careful and thorough job, you might arrive at a wrong interpretation.

In order to analyze a primary source, you need information about two things: the document itself, and the era from which it comes. You can base your information about the time period on the readings you do in class and on lectures.

On your own you need to think about the document itself. The following questions may be helpful to you as you begin to analyze the sources:

1. Look at the physical nature of your source. This is particularly important and powerful if you are dealing with an original source (i.e., an actual old letter, rather than a transcribed and published version of the same letter). What can you learn from the form of the source? (Was it written on fancy paper in elegant handwriting, or on scrap-paper, scribbled in pencil?) What does this tell you?
2. Think about the purpose of the source. What was the author's message or argument? What was he/she trying to get across? Is the message explicit, or are there implicit messages as well?
3. What do you know about the author? Race, sex, class, occupation, religion, age, region, political beliefs? Does any of this matter? How?

4. Who constituted the intended audience? Was this source meant for one person's eyes, or for the public? How does that affect the source?
5. What can a careful reading of the text (even if it is an object) tell you? How does the language work? What are the important metaphors or symbols? What can the author's choice of words tell you? What about the silences — what does the author choose NOT to talk about?

(Above information taken from [Carlton University History](#))

**Assignment:**

For this assignment, you will need to pick **1** of the 6 questions above. Prepare a script that answers that question based on one of the primary sources in the sources section of the writing assignment you selected to write on. Then in Canvas record a 1-2 minute audio file recording your answers. Bonus points will be given to students who have the most engaging and historically accurate thinking recordings.

[Visual Directions for completing the assignment.](#)