



TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
tolerance.org

Critical Literacy for Historical Thinking Skills

	Analyzing historical sources and evidence	Making historical connections	Chronological reasoning	Creating and supporting a historical argument
GAPS AND SILENCES	Are certain people or groups marginalized or given minor roles while others are privileged or given center stage?	Does the source give voice to historically silenced people or groups? If so, how? Does someone else retell their stories, or do those people or groups tell their own stories?	Are certain events, cause-and-effect relationships or narratives left out by the author's interpretation of chronology?	Which elements of this source, if any, provide an authentic account or reflection of people's lived experiences?
INTERTEXTUALITY	What cultural, political or economic language or ideas are woven throughout this source in a way that's similar to other sources? How does this source add to those?	What are some examples of sources from other periods in history that connect to the topics or issues addressed in this source? How have these topics or issues changed over time?	How can this source be paired with others to give a fuller or more complicated chronological account?	What are some other sources that make the same historical argument or claim—or that contradict the claim—made in this source?

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POSITIONING	How does the author’s position, attitude, beliefs or points of view affect the validity of this source in relation to the topic?	How do the attitudes, beliefs or points of view of the author or speaker connect to history and to other sources?	How might the author and his/her message have been influenced by what was happening at the time this source was created?	How might the author’s or speaker’s attitudes, beliefs or points of view affect the argument or claim that he or she made? How does my positioning relative to the author, topic or speaker affect my historical critique of this source?
CONTEXT	How is this source (and its subtext) informed by a political agenda, historical, social, economic and cultural context, or place? How is that agenda, context or place relevant to my evaluation of this source?	In what place and historical, social, economic or cultural context was this source written or created?	Does the argument hold up over time, or is its context tied to a specific event or period?	When considering multiple contexts, how strong or weak are the historical arguments and claims in this source?