Document Analysis

Practice analyzing documents will enhance critical thinking abilities, prepare you for advanced-level history in high school, and will be useful in future research papers. Performing a document analysis will be slow at first, but with practice it will become second-nature. The below outline is to be used when a document analysis is assigned.

1. What kind of document is this?
   1. Primary or secondary?
   2. Letter, speech, diary entry, newspaper article, academic article, legal document, song, poem, novel, etc.
2. When was this document created?
3. Who created this document?
4. Why was this document created? Is there any bias to this document?
5. What does this document tell you? You can approach this from two different directions. The first is to pull quotes out of the document and to explain the meaning of the quotation. The second approach is to write what you think the document says, and then provide quotations from the document as proof. Examples of what you can learn from a document are

What does the document tell you about…

* 1. The time period it was written? Example/proof.
  2. The people of the time? Example/proof.
  3. The creator of the document? Example/proof.
  4. What was important to the people of the time? Example/proof.
  5. What is the result of this document? Example/proof.