# THE PROCESS OF HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

## Part A: Research

- 1. Create an Investigative Question
- 2. Seek Information from Primary and Secondary Sources

## Part B: Analyze Evidence

### STEPS 1-4: ANALYZING AN INDIVIDUAL SOURCE:

- 1. LITERAL SOURCE QUESTIONING What are the literal aspects of the document?
- 2. LOOKING FOR POINT OF VIEW & PERSPECTIVE *What is the point of view of the source?*
- 3. LOOKING AT THE CONTEXT How did historical circumstances shape the source?
- 4. ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SOURCE *What can be learned from this piece of evidence?*

### STEP 5: WORKING WITH MULTIPLE SOURCES

5. CORROBORATION How do different pieces of evidence compare?

# Part C: Making an Interpretation

- 1. Construct an Explanation about History
- 2. Seek Peer Review



#### THE PROCESS OF HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

#### Part A: Research

Individual Sources

- 1. Create an Investigative Question
- 2. Seek Information from Primary and Secondary Sources

#### Part B: Analyze Evidence

#### 1. LITERAL SOURCE QUESTIONING

- What type of document is this? (poetry, diary, government document)
- What is the setting? (time and place)
- Who wrote the document? Did the recorder have firsthand knowledge of the event? Or, did the recorder report what others saw and heard?
- Was the information recorded during the event, immediately after the event, or after some lapse of time?
- What is the document generally about?

#### 2. LOOKING FOR POINT OF VIEW & PERSPECTIVE

- What religion, sex, and social class is the author?
- What is the author's social position?
- What "loaded" words or strong descriptive words are used? (clues to perspective)
- What is the intent of the author?
- How might the author be biased?
- What is omitted?
- Overall: What perspective or point of view on the topic is presented?

#### 3. LOOKING AT THE CONTEXT

- Who is the intended audience?
- What else is going on at this time that might have affected this source's content?
- What ideas were present in the predominant culture of the time?
- How might the context (previous questions in this step) have affected the content of the source?

#### 4. ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SOURCE

- Can we determine the literal aspects of the source?
- What can we learn from the point of view of the source?
- What questions does the source answer about my topic or the leading question?
- What questions are left unanswered?

#### 5. CORROBORATION

- Are there other sources to support this source?
- Are there sources that disagree with this source? Why?
- What's the same? What's different?
- What are the reasons for the similarities and differences?
- Do sources acknowledge counter evidence?
- Was anything omitted?

#### Part C: Making an Interpretation

- 1. Construct an Explanation about History
  - Which sources will I choose to help me with my topic or leading question? Why?
  - How many pieces of evidence do I need?
  - How will I create an answer to my question that incorporates and accounts for conflicting evidence?

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- 2. Seek Peer Review
  - Is my explanation convincing?
  - Does my explanation have support from several pieces of evidence?
  - Does my explanation reflect the multiple perspectives of the event or era?
  - Is my explanation clearly written or demonstrated in my final product?

Multible Sources

University of California, Davis

http://historyproject.ucdavis.edu

Professional Development for Social Science Teachers