

PRIMARY SOURCE RESEARCH ANALYSIS




What is a Primary Source?

“Primary sources provide first hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Often these sources are created at the time when the events or conditions are occurring, but primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later. Primary sources are characterized by their content, regardless of whether they are available in original format, in microfilm/microfiche, in digital format, or in published format.”¹



Finding an Image

1. Go to www.loc.gov (**Library of Congress** website).
2. Look for the **Digital Collections** tab in the middle of the home page.
3. Type in a keyword(s) in the search menu at the top of the page and then click the “” (search button).
4. You can also refine your search by using the tools listed on the left side of the *Digital Collections* page (i.e. subject, format, etc.)
5. Another way to refine your search is to click the box at the top of the page where you see “*Digital Collections*.” After clicking on this more options will appear. Try clicking the “**Prints and Photographs**” option.



Copying Your Image to a Word Document

1. Move your cursor over the image.
2. Right click on the image.
3. Click “Copy Image”
4. Go to your Word document
5. Right click and click “Paste”
6. Resize your document so that it is no more than half a page in size.

¹ <http://primarysources.yale.edu>

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What Your Assignment Should Include

1. 1 page analysis of the primary source (summary, assessment & reflection).
2. 1 page with image and citation information.
3. You will turn in a total of two pages.
4. See writing sample below.



Citing Your Image

1. Go to the page where your image was found
2. Near the bottom on the left side you will see "**Cite This Item**" with little plus sign will next to it.
3. Click "**Cite This Item.**"
4. Copy and paste the "**Chicago citation style**" into your Word document under the image you chose (see writing sample below).



Analyzing Your Primary Source

Your paper for each primary source analysis will consist of one full page. This page will be divided into three equal length paragraphs. Listed below are the names of each paragraph, as well as questions you will want to consider when composing each paragraph.

☐ **SUMMARY**

- Which person, event, or theme might the image be connected to?
- Is there any text in the image? If so, what is its significance?
- Is a person in the image? If so, what is their significance or importance? Is it their social or political status, clothing, or surroundings that makes their presence in the image notable?
- Are there important objects in the image? If so, tell why they are important to understanding the image.

☐ **ASSESSMENT**

- Why might the image have been produced?
- Who might the intended audience have been?

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- What is the *significance* of the primary source.
- Is there any summary information or notes in the citation information that helps you understand the image?
- Why might the image have been important during the period when it was created?

REFLECTION

- What questions might you have about the image (who, what, when, why, or how)?
 - Be sure your questions are significant, rather than trivial.
- Why might the image be important now? How does the primary source assist viewers in developing an understanding of the course material?

WHAT TO AVOID

- **Avoid** simply describing the image. The reader can see your image. Your job is to analyze.
- **Do not misidentify the image.** - Do not refer to a painting, map, etc. as a photograph. Using the general term “image” is recommended to avoid this problem.
- **Copy the summary or notes** - Do not simply copy the summary or notes listed in the citation information.
- **Present arguments without evidence** - Do not suggest an argument that is merely an assumption. Provide some type of evidence for your argument. See writing sample for examples.
- **Outside or additional research** - Do not do any additional research for this assignment. Use the information we covered in class as supporting evidence for your analysis.
- **In text citations or footnotes** - No in text citations or footnotes will be needed because you will not be doing any additional research. Instead, you will use the information we learned in class to analyze your primary source.

TERMS & PHRASES TO USE WHEN SUGGESTING AN ARGUMENT

- This suggests...
- Perhaps...
- It is possible...
- One could argue...
- It appears...

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TRANSITIONAL PHRASES - For a complete list of transitional words and phrases, visit <https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Transitions.html>.

When starting a sentence, be sure a comma follows all transitional words and phrases.

Transitions for Adding a Statement

- In addition,
- Furthermore,
- Moreover,
- Additionally,
- Also,

Transitions for Opposing Statements

- Although,
- On the other hand,
- However,
- Instead,

Transitions for Similarities

- Similarly,
- On the same token,

Transitions for Conclusions

- In conclusion,
- As a result,
- As such,
- In this way,

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Primary Source Research Assignment Rubric				
Category	(4 points)	(3 points)	(2 points)	1 (point)
Primary Source	Image & citation info included. Image follows assignment guidelines.	Image & citation included, but no citation included. Citation includes errors.	Image OR citation info not included , OR image does not follow guidelines.	Image & citation NOT included.
Analysis	Analysis clearly relates to the primary source. Includes several supporting details. Arguments are focused and contain depth of analysis . Observation/analysis formula is always followed.	Analysis clearly relates to the primary source. It includes several supporting details. Observation/analysis formula usually followed.	Analysis relates to the primary source, but lacks supporting details or depth of analysis; OR observation/analysis formula not followed.	Analysis has little or nothing to do with the primary source ; OR lacks any depth of analysis; OR observation/analysis formula ignored .
Organization	Information is very organized within exceptionally well-constructed paragraphs. All paragraphs contain related topics.	Information is organized within well-constructed paragraphs. Paragraphs generally contain related topics.	Information is not well organized; OR paragraphs are not well-constructed ; OR paragraphs sometimes contain unrelated topics.	The information and paragraphs are disorganized ; OR paragraphs always contain unrelated topics.
Mechanics	Very well written. No errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation. Ideas are focused and easy to follow . Sentence structure and related mechanics are flawless .	Well written, Few, if any, errors. Focused, easy to follow, with few mechanical errors .	Lacks focus , contains several errors ; OR sentence structure adds to confusion for the reader .	Writing needs a great deal of improvement. Errors distract the reader from the content.
Formatting	Margins, paragraph & line spacing, font type & size are all correct . Separate pages for cover page, image, and analysis.	Margins, paragraph & line spacing, font type & size contain minor errors . Separate pages for cover page, image, and analysis contain minor errors .	Margins, paragraph & line spacing, font type & size contain multiple errors . Separate pages for cover page, image, and analysis contain multiple errors .	Multiple patterns of errors through out the paper.

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WRITING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as the last step before you turn in your assignment.

- ☐ Typed
- ☐ Double spaced
- ☐ Times New Roman font (size 12)
- ☐ One inch margins left, right, top & bottom
- ☐ Indent paragraphs
- ☐ **No skipping lines between paragraphs** (you will be double spacing all lines and indenting paragraphs instead)
- ☐ All words spelled completely with **no use of contractions** (i.e. *isn't, doesn't, can't...*) unless quoting any text contained in the primary source.
- ☐ **Proofread your work!**

WRITING SAMPLE

- The writing sample on the next page is from a former student. The student provided permission to use his/her analysis, but chose to remain anonymous.
- The image discussed is listed on the page following the assessment.
- Notice how the paper looks.
 - Each paragraph is approximately 1/3 of the page.
 - Notice where the citation is placed (at the beginning of the page).
 - Notice how the citation is single spaced, and the paragraph is double spaced.

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"Zeltlager Der Revolutionären Truppen Auf Den Dächern Von Eisenbahn Wagon in México, [ca. 1914]." N.p.: n.p., 1914. http://hdl.handle.net/10020/98_r_5_103.

This photograph was taken in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution. It displays many key features of the Revolution and the modernization period from the Porfiriato. Objects that mark the modernization period are the railroad system and the telecommunication poles. Items related to the Revolution are men and women on top of the trains. They appear to be rebel soldiers with their families. Armies on all sides of the Revolution used trains for rapid mobilization. In addition, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, commander of the northern rebel troops, allowed his soldiers to bring their families when they traveled.

Brehmn's photograph gives the audience a powerful glance at the daily lives of these nomadic soldiers during their fight for land reform and rebellion against a corrupt government. The photograph reveals the harsh conditions many of these soldiers and their families must have experienced this during long journeys from one area of Mexico to another. Moreover, the provides evidence to the argument that people traveled on top of the trains so there would be room for horses, canons, and soldiers inside the trains. In this way, one could argue the photograph was taken to show how rebel soldiers lived during the Mexican Revolution.

Studying a photograph such as this provides the viewer with a visual representation of how some rebel troops traveled during the Mexican Revolution. Moreover, the viewer gets a sense of the conditions these families endured while traveling with the rebel soldiers.

Additionally, the image provides evidence that locomotives may have played an important role during the Mexican Revolution. How would people and their belongings remain on top of the train while it was in motion. If you look closely, there is even a dog on top of the train.

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