

USING APPARTS TO ANALYZE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

To understand history or politics it is essential that you learn to critically examine significant documents. APPARTS is an "easy to remember" acronym for the following:

AUTHOR

Who created the source? What do you know about the author? What is the author's point of view?

PLACE AND TIME

Where and when was the source produced? How might this affect the meaning of the source? (Context, Context, Context!)

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Beyond information about the author and the context of its creation, what do you know that would help you further understand the primary source? For example, do you recognize any symbols and recall what they represent?

AUDIENCE

For whom was the source created and how might this affect the reliability of the source? Were there multiple audiences?

REASON

Why was this source produced at the time it was produced?

THE MAIN IDEA

What main point is the source trying to convey? What is the central message of the document?

SIGNIFICANCE

Why is this source important? What inferences can you draw from this document? Ask yourself, "So what?" What should a student of history or politics take away from the analysis of this document?