Document Analysis

1. What type of document is this? __ Graph __ Political cartoon __ Diary excerpt __ Letter __ Patent __ Report __ Memorandum __ Meeting minutes __ Telegram __ Press Release __ Resolution __ Public law __ Executive Order __ Chart __ Summary __ Transcript __ Statement __ Advertisement __ Message, Speech, Address (actual or draft) __ Newspaper or magazine article __ Map __ Notes __ Other - ________________

2. Is this document classified “Top Secret”, “Secret”, or “Confidential”? __ yes __ no
   If classified, when was it “declassified” and open to the public? ___________ by whom? ________________

3. Describe the physical qualities of the document (check all that apply):
   __ official letterhead – which government agency or office? ________________
   __ from a private citizen __ handwritten __ typed __ official seals
   __ notations on page __ other characteristics ________________

4. Document date(s) _______________ Where was it written or created? ________________

5. Author/creator _________________ What is the author’s status/title? ________________

6. For what person(s) is this document intended? ________________

7. Why was this document created? ________________

8. In a brief summary of three to five sentences, explain the factual information contained in this primary source document:
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

9. Does this author also state opinions? __yes __ no If yes, cite an example of an opinion the author
   presented __________________________________________________________________

10. Why is this a valuable source of information? ____________________________________________________________________

11. How can you use this source? Explain: ____________________________________________________________________

12. What is left unanswered in this document? What questions would you like the author(s) to answer?
    ____________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________

Activity:

Have students bring to class one or two primary source documents (or photocopies) from home (i.e. a sales receipt, legal description of real estate, a letter from years ago, marriage license, grade report). Students can present and discuss their contributions as a whole class or small group exercise and complete this analysis sheet on one or more of these documents.

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