

Reading like a historian

After several weeks of practice, you've now got a good sense of how closely one needs to read to really understand a historical text. For the rest of the semester, we'll focus on systematically asking and answering the questions that historians keep in mind every time they encounter a text from the past, and explicitly connecting our primary sources with the material from lessons

Going forward, you should make sure to answer each of these questions when you do your think-aloud. While you should keep them in mind the whole time, many people find it best to explicitly answer them at the end, even if they touched upon them in the body of the think-aloud.

1. Who is the author? What can you infer about them from the text? **Support your claims with evidence from the text.** [Do not look them up online.]
2. What was the author/creator's motive in producing the text? What is their argument? **Support your claims with evidence.**
3. What was the intended audience for this text? What were they supposed to take away from it? How might those outside of the intended audience have interpreted the text and reacted to it? **Support your claims with evidence.**
4. When was this text created? How does its specific chronological position help us understand it? **Support your claims with evidence.**
5. What is the form of this text? (Speech, newspaper article, etc.) How was this text consumed? What do those things help us understand about the document? **Support your claims with evidence.**

The other thing we want to work on, quite explicitly, is using the material from lessons to help us understand what we're reading. To that end, your think-alouds are now expected to contain:

1. *At least two specific events, people, or ideas* from the current week's lessons that help us understand the text.
2. *At least two specific events, people, or ideas* from earlier lessons that help us understand the text.

In both cases, your connections between the primary source and the material from lessons need to be *specific* and *explanatory*. In other words, you should be explaining to me how a given piece of information from lessons helps you understand a specific line or passage in the primary source, or helps you answer one of the questions listed above.

Without addressing these new components of historical thinking, an assignment cannot receive a grade higher than a 2.