

A guide - how to make inferences from sources.



My History Tutor

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Introduction

This guide aims to provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to understand and analyse the content of a source so that you can make an inference based on that content.

02

What are Sources?

A **source** is anything that tells us about the past. Sources can be written, visual, objects or buildings. Sources are often grouped into '**primary**' and '**secondary**' sources.

Primary sources are ones created during the time period you are studying. For example, if you were studying the Roman Empire, then a Roman coin or a text written by a Roman would be a primary source.

Secondary sources are ones that were created after the time period you are studying. Therefore, if you were studying the Roman Empire then the book '**SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome**' by Professor Mary Beard published in 2016 is a secondary source.

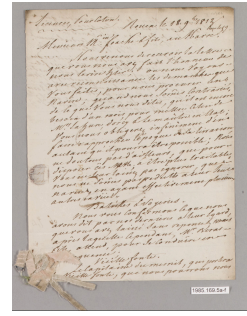
Paintings



Newspapers



Letters



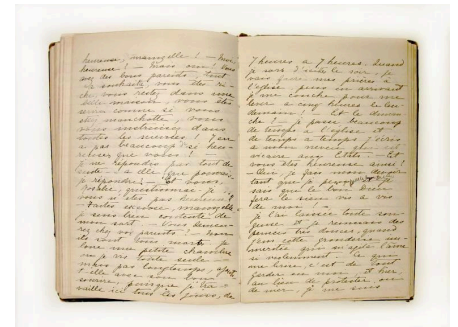
Speeches

“..we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender”, Churchill June 1940

Artefacts



Diaries



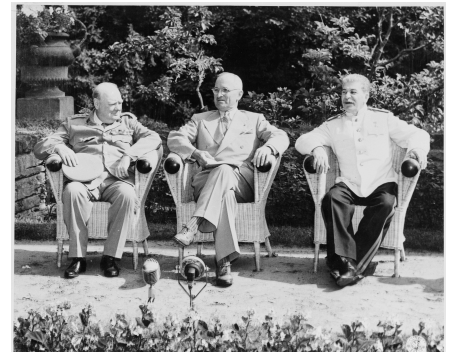
Oral Histories



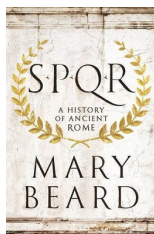
Cartoons



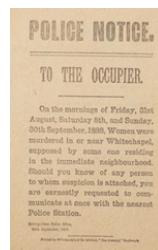
Photographs



Books



Posters



Government Documents



Department for Education

What is an inference?

Historians analyse sources to build their understanding of past events, people and developments. They use the content of a source in a number of ways.

What is the 'content' of a source?

The 'content' of a source is what it says or shows you, if it is a visual source. So in the case of Anne Frank's diary, it is the information Anne wrote down. A photograph might show a particular scene or people.

What is an inference?

An inference is defined as '*something you work out based on the evidence the source gives you*'.

In other words, think about:

- What can you 'read between the lines' from the source
- What the source suggests based on what you see or read
- What is the 'hidden' message from the source
- What is the tone of the source - happy, sad, excited, sarcastic, angry, fearful?

For **written sources**, look at the language the author has chosen to use to describe the events, people or developments.

For visual sources, there are a range of details you should analyse:

- look carefully at people's expressions or body language
- If it is a cartoon, how has the cartoonist represented the topic?

How do I infer from a source?

Follow these three simple steps:

STEP
01

What you infer from a source will depend on what question you are answering. So start with, what is the focus of the question?

Read the source and highlight 2 sentences or details that are relevant to the focus of the question.

STEP
02

STEP
03

Work out what you can infer from what you have highlighted.

An Example from KS3

Here is an example based on the KS3 curriculum.

The question is: *What can you infer from Source A about reactions to the execution of King Charles I?*

Source A: Dutch engraving made in 1649 of the execution of King Charles I.



Step 1 Look at the focus of the question - **reactions to the execution of King Charles I.**



Look for people's **reactions** - highlight them.

Step 2



Step 3 What can you **infer** about **reactions to the execution** from what you highlighted?



- The person fainting = **horrified, scared, feeling ill, upset**
- The light coming down from heaven = **Charles is ascending to heaven, he must be a good person, the artist believes he is not guilty.**

Step 4 Write your answer by stating what you infer supported by the detail from the source.



*I can infer from Source A that some **people reacted** with **horror and were upset** by the **execution of King Charles** because **I can see a woman fainting at seeing the execution.***

An Example from GCSE History

Here is an example based on the KS4 GCSE curriculum.

The question is: *What can you infer from Source A about the events in Eastern Europe after the Second World War?*

Source A: Speech by Winston Churchill in Fulton, US, in March 1946.



“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence and increasing measures of control from Moscow. The Communist parties are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. .. there is no true democracy.”

Step 1

Look for the focus of the question - **about events in Eastern Europe.**



Step 2

Look for consequences of events in Eastern Europe - highlight them.



Step 3



What can you **infer about events in Eastern Europe** from what you highlighted?

- an iron curtain has descended = **Europe is divided and Eastern Europe has been cut off from the West.**
- to obtain totalitarian control. .. there is no true democracy = **the USSR has established communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe.**

Step 4

Write your answer by stating what you infer supported by the detail from the source.



*I can infer from Source A that events in Eastern Europe **resulted in Europe being divided, with Eastern Europe cut off from the West** because Source A states, “**an iron curtain has descended.**”*

*I can infer from Source A that events in Eastern Europe **resulted in the creation of communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe** by the USSR because Source A states, “**obtain totalitarian control there is no true democracy.**”*

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Who is My History Tutor?

I'm Lynn! I am a fully qualified History teacher with over twenty-five years of teaching experience in secondary schools with a proven track record of successfully teaching history at GCSE and A level.

I have an BSc (Hons) in Modern History and Politics and a PGCE in History and Social Sciences from the University of Leeds. In addition to holding a DBS on the update service, I have 'Advanced Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent' certificate (Sept 2024).

In 2020, I decided to move away from my career as a Head of Humanities to launch my own online history tuition business. My History Tutor was born! I provide 1:1 online tailor made tuition for KS3, GCSE and A level students (years 7 to 13). I tutor children from all across the world, both home educated and school educated. I love my subject, which is demonstrated by my engaging lessons and an enthusiastic approach. I provide a step-by-step guidance tailored to the needs of the child, offering advice on how to answer questions and understand exam papers, revision techniques and building confidence.

In my leisure time, I love to spend time in the garden, exploring the coast near where I live in beautiful Dorset, and spending time with family and friends.



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How to contact My History Tutor

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