

Analyzing Historical Documents





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College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading:

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.





Throughout the history of the United States, several documents have been powerful enough to change the course of the nation.

Though written centuries apart, many of these documents contain the same basic recurring themes.

As a class, brainstorm a list of texts, speeches and photographs that have had a significant impact on U.S. history. Discuss any recurring themes that are present in these documents.





When analyzing historical U.S. documents, it is important to consider:

- Who created the document?
- When was the document created?
- Why was the document created?
- Who was the document created for?



Pick a text from your list of significant documents and consider the above questions. What was the purpose of the document? Was it successful? Has it had an impact on history?





Authors often use the persuasive appeals **ethos**, **pathos** and **logos** to help structure their arguments.

Ethos is when the author emphasizes his or her own credibility on a given subject. Authors can establish ethos in a number of ways; by listing credentials, referencing real life experience or discussing research they have conducted.

Pathos is when the author appeals to the audience's emotions. Authors use strong, emotionally charged language or anecdotes to elicit a response from the audience.

Logos is when the author uses logic or reason. Authors use persuasive language and evidence to support their claims.





The Declaration of Independence



Declaration of Sentiments



Plessy v. Ferguson





Understanding historical events is a complex process due to the number of possible perspectives.

When studying a historical event, you should investigate sources from multiple perspectives. Always evaluate the reliability of your sources and identify any bias.

Try to use different formats and media to gather information. You could consider using:

- articles/essays
- literature
- photographs
- textbooks
- websites
- film.



Identifying reliable sources



Analyzing sources

