These are general guidelines to follow when analyzing any type of primary or secondary source. The point of this handout is for this process to become routine—a natural process of the history classroom.

*Step 1*: **Name/title or description of source** (Not “Document A”)

*Step 2*: **Main Idea/Purpose** – What is the main idea; why did the author create this source?

*Step 3*: **Historical Context** – What is going on historically at the point of creation of this source (e.g., specific historical events, ideas, phenomena, location)? Where does this source fall into the historical timeline of the period? How can you connect this to the broader topic, thesis, and/or argument?

*Step 4*: **Point of View/Perspective** – Can you identify an important aspect of WHO the author is, an INFLUENCE that shaped the author or source, and explain HOW this might have impacted the information presented in the source?

*Step 5*: **Intended Audience** – Who would find this source’s information potentially useful, why? How would that affect their view of the subject?

*Step 6*: **Interpret, Evaluate, & Synthesize** – Examine the credibility, usefulness, and significance of the source along with OUTSIDE INFORMATION (that is not present in the source provided) to support and advance the stated thesis and/or relevant argument.

For your **synthesis**, you need to explain the connection between the argument and ONE of the following:

1. a development in a different historical period, situation, or geographical area;
2. a course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the argument (such as a political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual lens of history);
3. a different discipline or field of inquiry (such as economics, government and politics, art history, or anthropology). [Note: Option C ONLY pertains to AP European and AP World History courses.]