



LS History Source Advice

POINTS ON HOW TO APPROACH SOURCE QUESTIONS

A major skill in history is to be able to look at sources. These sources tell us a lot about the period of history we study, especially as we cannot time travel. Therefore, we use sources to tell us about what happened in the past. However, sometimes, just like today, the sources don't tell us the truth and we have to be careful about how much we use them.

The most important aspect of source analysis is knowing what the analysis part actually is! It can be divided into two parts:

1. Analysis of content (what the source is telling or showing you). For example, does the source tell you a lot about the period you are studying or just a little. Does it tell the truth or is it stretching the truth? You will know because you can compare it with your own knowledge.

2. Analysis of provenance. A lot of students feel embarrassed to ask what provenance means; it basically refers to the background of the source, i.e. who wrote it, when was it written, and why was it written? The answers to these questions will obviously affect how reliable or useful the source is. For example, a source written 500 years after the event may not be as useful if you are trying to find out about what happened 500 years ago. Another example is that a diary might be considered more useful than a newspaper because a diary is a collection of personal thoughts, whereas a newspaper article might be sensationalised or censored. There is a simple formula to remember this — NOP=R/U.

Nature — what the source is, for example, opinion poll, newspaper, cartoon, propaganda poster, radio broadcast, article, report, etc.

Origin — who wrote the source; check who wrote it as they might have a radical opinion; and check when it was produced, as that will affect a source. (Remember that just because it was written at the time doesn't make it more reliable!); and it is useful if you can include where it was written as sometimes you may come across British cartoons commenting on the situation in Germany. Are they qualified to do that?

Purpose — why was it produced? There are four categories here which might affect its usefulness or reliability. These are: to inform, usually an article or report; to entertain, usually films or cartoons; to persuade, usually propaganda; or to educate, usually textbooks.

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Reliability. This is about how much you can trust the source.

Or

Usefulness. This is how much information a source can give you. A source might not be absolutely truthful but it is still useful as it tells you what some people may have thought. You should also include how much you trust the source when a question asks you for usefulness.

Overleaf is advice on how to approach some of the types of questions you will get in the Year 9 course.

How Useful is Source x for.....?

This question appears in Year 7 but it is useful to demonstrate how to answer a usefulness question.

Why did people go on Crusade?

Study Source B (below), and answer the questions that follow.

Source B: Part of a speech made by Pope Urban II in 1095 to Church leaders and nobles in France. Saracen is a word for Muslims in the middle ages and infidel was a word used to describe non-Christians in the middle ages. Christians use neither of these words today.

'Brothers, I speak as a messenger from God...your fellow Christians in the east desperately need help. The Saracens have attacked them and have pushed deep into Christian land. They are killing great numbers of Christians. They are destroying churches and land. In the name of God, I beg you to drive out these foul creatures.

Your own land has too many people. There is not much wealth here. The soil hardly grows enough to support you. Set out for Jerusalem. Take that land from the wicked infidel and make it your own.

If you die on your journey or if you are killed in battle against these Saracens all your sins will be forgiven at once. God Himself has given me the power to tell you this.'

- a. How useful is source B for explaining why people went on Crusade? Use the **Year 7 Source Advice document** to help you answer this question. (6 marks)

All sources are useful in telling you something about the attitudes or concerns of the person or organisation that created them. For example, this source is useful for explaining a variety of reasons why people went on Crusades and it is also useful because it's from the opinion of the Pope who ordered the Crusades.

Use the starter sentences in bold to help you. (The points in brackets are what you need to include yourself.)

The source is useful because it tells us (here, you need to explain what it tells you, which is useful to answering the question, in this case, why people went on Crusade; try to use quotations from the source). **From my own knowledge, I know this to be accurate because** (here, you need to give examples which back up the source content; for example, the source mentions 'there is not much wealth here.' This is accurate because not everybody made money in England. In Jerusalem, there was a lot more land and different products to make money from, such as spices and fruit). **However, the source does tell us other reasons why people went on Crusade** (here, you need to say what the source doesn't tell us about the question it is asking).

However, the usefulness can be challenged based on the provenance. (This is the hard part and requires you to use at least **one** aspect of the NOP formula on the first page of your source advice.)

For example (and I have done one for you), the nature of the source is a speech which means the source might not be that useful (as Pope Urban would be trying to persuade people to go on crusade, which means he might be talking about lots of reasons to get peasants to fight for the Church.

Overall, I believe the source is (very, not very useful/limited) because...

Why was Source x published in....?

This question is asking you **why** the source was published. It was obviously published during a controversial time so keep this in mind. This is not asking you to use your NOP formula but you can use the **Purpose** points to explain why. You must then use your own knowledge to explain further.

Example sentences

Source x was published during.... and seems to show... (use quotations to back up your points).

The source was published.... (to inform, to entertain, to educate, to persuade, to convince) because ... (use details/quotations from the source).

From my own knowledge, I know why this source was published at this time because....

Here is an example below...

Study Source C.

Why was this cartoon published in 1947? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge.

(8 marks)

Source C: An American cartoon published in 1947. The title of the cartoon is 'When the time is right'.



Answer: Source C was clearly published in order to encourage American people to support the likes of the Marshall Plan and Truman doctrine in trying to protect the people of Czechoslovakia. I know this is the purpose because of specific events in 1947. For example, the Czech government decided to attend the Paris Peace Conference about Marshall Aid in July 1947. They also had a failed harvest in 1947 and desperately needed help. Stalin did not allow them to attend the Paris Peace Conference and therefore, it is clear the cartoonist is trying to encourage the American audience of the cartoon to help the Czechs from Russia influence, especially as we can see the Kremlin in the background of the cartoon. The phrase 'When the time is right' is clearly trying to say that the time is nearly up and the Czechs might soon be under Soviet control.