

# Interrogation Assistance

Asking the right questions of documents takes practice. Here are some suggested questions to dig deeper and make the most of the evidence.

Source: Laurel Schmidt, 2007, *Social Studies That Sticks*, 61-62.

## Step 1: What Is the Document?

- What type of document is this?
- Is it from a newspaper or magazine?
- Is the author writing as an individual or for an organization?
- When and where was it written?
- Is it handwritten or machine printed? What does that suggest?
- What do you notice about the typeface or design?
- Can you identify the author?
- What do you know or can guess about the author?

## Step 3: What's the Point?

- Why was this document written?
- Was it written for a public audience or a specific group?
- Is it personal, or for a few people?
- How do you know who it is for?
- What does the author hope to do with this document (inform? argue? persuade?)
- What phrases or words indicate that author's intent?
- What biases might the author have?
- Why might the author have biases?
- What ideas, works, or phrases suggest bias?

## Step 2: What Does It Say?

- Who or what is the story or information about?
- What do the words say?
- What do they mean?
- What's unusual about the language?
- What information does this source add to your research?
- What are the important facts you learned from the document?
- Does the author have first- or secondhand knowledge about what he or she has written?

## Step 4: What Else Do I Want to Know?

- What do I wonder about this document?
- What else do I want to know?
- What guesses (inferences) can I make from this?
- What other primary or secondary sources might help answer my questions?
- How can I find information on the Internet?
- Who still knows about this event?
- Who else could give me more information?