A good practice when analyzing a primary source is to carry out the following steps:

- 1. Meet the document
- 2. Observe its parts.
- 3. Try to make sense of it.
- 4. Use it as historical evidence.

This worksheet is designed to help you do this. This worksheet was inspired by the "Analyze an Artifact" worksheet produced by the National Archives.

Meet the artifact

- 1. Check all boxes that describe interesting physical characteristics of the document:
 - \bigcirc Handwritten
 - \bigcirc Typed
 - $\bigcirc\,$ Includes mathematical notation
 - \bigcirc Includes diagrams
 - \bigcirc Other (explain)

2. What do you notice first?

Observe its parts

- 3. What language is the text written in?
- 4. Write a physical description of the document for someone who can't see it. Pay attention to the shape, color, texture, size, weight, age, condition.

5. Who created the document? Was it written by one person? A group?

6. When was the document created?

7. Does the document include marks from people or organizations other than than author(s)? Examples of people might be a printer, a publisher, a copyist, a previous owner, or a library archivist?

8. How could you find more information about who created the document?

9. For what audience was the document written? What can you say about their mathematical training? How could you do more research on them?

Try to make sense of it

10. Why do you think this document was written?

11. What library (or university or...) has the physical copy of the document. How do you think the document ended up there?

Use it as historical evidence

12. List two things the document tells you about mathematics at the time it was written.

13. You could try to learn more from this document by finding an English language translation of it. What are some questions you would like to answer by comparing the document to a translation. Give at least one question.