
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:

- Handwritten
- Typed
- Includes mathematical notation
- Includes diagrams
- 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.

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?

