

## **ACAPS**

### *Author, Context, Audience, Purpose, and Significance*

ACAPS guides you through the process of “ways of thinking” when analyzing primary sources. This means considering how the background of the author, the context of the time, the audience being addressed and the purpose of the source all affect its meaning and significance.

When analyzing a primary source that has been assigned to you, consider the following questions:

**Author:** Who created the source? What do you know about this person or his/her point of view? How might this affect the source’s meaning?

**Context:** When and where was the source created? What was going on historically at that time and place? How might this affect its meaning?

**Audience:** For what audience (for whom) was this source created? How might this affect its meaning?

**Purpose:** For what reason (WHY) was this source created? How might this affect its meaning?

**Significance:** What can be learned or inferred from this source? What does the existence of this source suggest might be true about the time period being studied? What is the main idea of the source? Why is it important?

The ACAPS system can be used to analyze a wide variety of types of sources, not just written texts. The questions may change depending on the source being used, but the goal is the same: to understand the time period or event that is being studied.