**Document Analysis Guide**

1. Is this document a primary or secondary source? How do you know?
2. Is the author recording his or her own observations or quoting somebody else? Was the author present at the time of the event described? How do you know?
3. Number all the sentences in the document.
4. Read each sentence in the document and write either the sentence or its number under one of the following headings:

Fact statements are those that can be proven by reference to information in another text or to other sources (statements about dates, times and location for example).

Opinions are statements that are offered without supporting evidence or are value statements.

Can’t tell statements are those that could be either fact or opinion but require more information, which may or may not be available.

Inferences are logical conclusions drawn from the other statements made. It is possible to draw logical conclusions from erroneous statements: inferences are not true simply because they are logical.

1. Read the statements again carefully and pay particular attention to the words used. Examine adjectives, adverbs and other descriptive phrases. **What kind of words does the author use?** Decide whether the words used are neutral descriptors intended to convey information or value judgements intended to persuade. Then answer the following:
2. Is the document an objective account of events or does it appear to be an objective account?
3. Is the document designed to persuade the reader to a particular point of view? Why do you think so?
4. Does the author succeed in his or her purpose?
5. This kind of analysis leads to the last issue: Why did the author produce this document – what was his or her purpose? The purpose may have been to tell the reader as simply and directly as possible about some issue or event. On the other hand, the document may have appeared to be objective but was written in such value-laden language that its worth may be suspect.
6. Why did the author write this document?
7. Is the document a reliable source of information?