

**Handout 1**

*Nonfiction Source Evaluation*

(adapted from Stanford Historical Education Group, Historical Thinking Chart,  
<https://sheg.stanford.edu/historical-thinking-chart>)

Nonfiction Reading Skills	Questions	Students should be able to . . .	Prompts
Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who wrote this? When and where was it written?</li> <li>What is the author's perspective or stake in the argument?</li> <li>Who is the intended audience? Why was it written?</li> <li>Is it reliable? Why? Why not?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the author's position on the event</li> <li>Identify and evaluate the author's purpose in producing the document</li> <li>Hypothesize what the author will say before reading the document</li> <li>Evaluate the source's trustworthiness by considering genre, audience, and purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author probably believes . . .</li> <li>I think the audience is . . .</li> <li>Based on the source information, I think the author might . . .</li> <li>I do/ don't trust this document because . . .</li> </ul>
Close Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What claims does the author make?</li> <li>What evidence does the author use?</li> <li>What is the strongest argument? Why? What is the weakest argument?</li> <li>What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?</li> <li>How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the author's claims about an event</li> <li>Evaluate the evidence and reasoning the author uses to support claims</li> <li>Evaluate author's word choice; understand that language is used deliberately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think the author chose these words in order to . . .</li> <li>The author is trying to convince me . . .</li> <li>The author claims . . .</li> <li>The evidence used to support the author's claims is . . .</li> </ul>
Corroboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do other documents say?</li> <li>Do the documents agree? If not, why?</li> <li>What are other possible documents?</li> <li>What documents are most reliable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish what is probable by comparing documents to each other</li> <li>Recognize disparities between accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author agrees/disagrees with . . .</li> <li>These documents all agree/ disagree about . . .</li> <li>Another document to consider might be . . .</li> </ul>