

Handout 2

Nonfiction Source Evaluation

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

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