Fitzgerald

**Process for Analyzing a Primary Source Document**

First Step –

Gathering your knowledge of the

Historical Context

of the document

use the introduction to orient yourself

to the time and place and group of people

in which the document existed.

State all you know from your studies about the target the introduction provides.

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* Puritans, from England
  + Wanted to purify the Church of England, not separate from it like the Pilgrims
    - Wanted everyone to read the Bible – wanted it printed in English
    - Wanted to have ministers who married and had families, instead of priests
* Wealthy merchants
  + Upper middle class - Excluded from aristocracy as not from the “right” families (bloodline)
* Wanted to start their own community with people who believed only like they did
  + Started a joint stock company
  + Got a charter for land in Massachusetts
  + Wanted this land because of natural harbor, currents passing by coast to carry ships to England, and lumber to build ships, which were all great ways to make money, as they were merchants; also, fishing and whaling grounds, which provided products to trade, like whale oil
* In1630, 1,000 came in 11 ships
  + 20,000 migrated by 1640
* Government centered on religion
  + Each town built around one church in the town center – ad to start a new town when hit a certain population
  + Held town meetings in the church
  + Forced attendance at church
  + Only church members could vote

2nd Step

Focus on the author/creator.

Who is the author? What do you know or can you guess is true of him?

Who is his or her intended audience?

What is his or her purpose for creating the document?

3rd Step

Judge the reliability of the author/creator.

Is there any reason this author might not be a trustworthy source of information?

Does the author/creator have a ***bias***?

Bias – a predisposition to view something positively

Does the author/creator have a ***prejudice***?

Prejudice – a predisposition to view something negatively

Step 4

Analyze the Document.

***Keeping context, author, audience, purpose, bias, and prejudice in mind!!!***

Take notes just as you would from a reading in the book.

Bullet ***the words of the document*** that you feel state its main idea.

Below the main idea bullet ***the words of the document*** that state key points made

in support of this main idea.

Pay attention to any strong words, phrases, images, or

literary techniques

(metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, repetition, symbolism, tone),

As an author usually works hardest on such things to express his or her most important points.

Step 5

Write your interpretation.

The ***topic sentence*** should introduce ***the author, the document, and your main idea***.

**Include information on**

the ***historical context*** that is key to understanding the document.

the ***author, intended audience and purpose***.

any ***bias and or prejudice*** of the author

State and develop

***the main idea*** and

***the key ideas to support or develop this main idea,***

making sure to have addressed any

***strong words, phrases, images, and techniques the author used.***

Finally, ***conclude***.

Do not to just directly repeat.

Try to offer a ***concluding thought*** on the overall topic of the document

or

tie the document to other points in history.

(This is called “synthesis.”)

*Possible* Step 6

Should you seek another document to

Corroborate

To corroborate – to find another document that will confirm this one is accurate

this document?