Fitzgerald

**Process for Analyzing a Primary Source Document**

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| 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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| 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? |

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| 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. |

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| 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.”) |

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| *Possible* Step 6  Is another document needed to  Corroborate this document?  To corroborate – to find another document that will confirm this one is accurate |