

# How to Use the Digital History Reader

## Evidence: Texts

The written texts included under Evidence represent a wide range of primary sources, including newspaper articles, speeches, proclamations, opinion pieces, excerpts from fiction, and more. When reading written evidence, follow the three steps below:

1. Identify the type of material that you're reading to establish the ***purpose*** of the text.
2. Understand the ***content*** of the material. Keep in mind the purpose identified in the first step, but also pay attention to the topics covered in the source. Attempt to answer the following questions:

*Who* are the important people?

*What* are the important events?

*When* do the events occur?

*What* are the important issues?

You may need to refer to the Context section to answer the questions.

3. Finally, place the document within the larger historical ***context***. If the document is an opinion piece, what point of view does the author present? If the evidence is an official proclamation or declaration, what is the objective of those making the statement? In the case of a letter or newspaper article, what is the author's relationship to the events being described? If the evidence is fictional writing, what does it reveal about the ideas and views of the time period? By following these steps while reading historical evidence, you will arrive at broader, deeper understandings of the events and processes under investigation.