

Cracking the Code **Reading Diaries, Journals, Letters, and other “unofficial manuscripts”** **as pieces of Primary Source communication**



Analysis / Interpretation / Evaluation Tips:

- Make a personal connection between the type of document and the student's own lives.
- Show a handwritten copy of the document if available. Allow students to practice reading the document using a magnifying glass or by transcribing 1-2 sentences on their own. Compare student transcriptions to official transcriptions.
- Ask students to identify as much factual information about the document writer or creator, from bibliographic record, if possible.
- Ask students to pose an historical inquiry question about the document, writer, or time period.
- If the document is long, divide it into sections and charge individuals or small groups with analysis of their own section. Print the document out, cut it apart, and use highlighters if needed.
- Ask students to list:
 - interesting / peculiar language. (They should use dictionaries to find origins and meanings of these words)
 - places and people mentioned. (They should consult maps and secondary sources to find identity of notable people.)
 - topics written about or discussed.
 - personal thoughts of writer.
 - other observations.
- Ask students to share information with one and create a hypothesis that addresses their inquiry question. Students should be able to support hypothesis with data from their findings.
- Ask students to find additional information from other sources to check their hypothesis.

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<p>Identify Factual Information <i>Time frame, place, age of author. Some life interests and year diary was written.</i></p>	
<p>Pose Historical Inquiry Question <i>How does the author feel about traveling? Are many other people traveling at the same time?</i></p>	
<p>List: <i>Interesting /peculiar language</i></p>	
<p>List: <i>Places and people</i></p>	
<p>List: <i>Topics written about or discussed</i></p>	
<p>List: <i>Personal thoughts of writer</i></p>	
<p>List: <i>Other observations</i></p>	
<p>Create hypothesis that addresses the inquiry question you created.</p>	
<p>List facts to support your hypothesis.</p>	