

Determining the Author's Point of View

It is important to understand what people thought or felt in the past to make sense of many historical events. *Historical perspective* is how historians and archaeologists describe historical events and issues from the perspective of people living at that time to avoid evaluating the past in terms of today's norms and values.

When reading a diary, letter, or other written primary source document, you can often tell the author's perspective, opinion, or point of view. Primary sources can help us understand why people did, thought, and said the things they did.

Author Info

Who is the author? What do you already know about the author?

What can you tell about the author from the primary source?

(Age, sex, race, religion, class, geographic origin, occupation, political beliefs, etc.)

Time and Place

Where was this source created?

When was this source created?

What do you already know about this time period?

Is this source about, or related to, a historical issue or event? If so, describe it

Point of View

What is the author's perspective, opinion, or point of view on the issue or event?

What words, metaphors, symbols, or images did the author use to express his or her

point of view? How does this author's point of view help you understand the past?

Anne Frank

When/Where was she born?

What was her life like?

What did she achieve?

How did she influence the world?

