# Analysis of a Historical Document

[Excerpt From *Holodomor in Ukraine, The Genocidal Famine 1932-33:*

*Teaching Materials for Teachers and Students* – By Valentina Kuryliw]

In analyzing a historical document, students develop critical thinking skills. There are three suggested stages for analyzing a historical document, adapted to various age groups and each is progressively more difficult and requires greater skills. It is important to ap­proach the analysis of a historical document in this sequence. This analysis gives students an opportunity to practice the historians’ craft by examining a primary document as a key resource in understanding a specific event. By examining such a document, the students use the “historical method” to re-construct the narrative of the event. (Students like detec­tives?)

Teacher Tip: Each group may receive the same document to work on, or different docu­ments from the same time period.

**Activity 1** Analysis of a Historical Document Grades 6-8

**Activity 2** Analysis of a Historical Document Grades 9-10

**Activity 3** Analysis of a Historical Document Grades 11-12

**Appropriate for students:**

Grades 6 - 12

**Curriculum Fit / Specific Expectations / Learning Outcomes:**

Please select outcomes you wish to cover from either English language arts or so­cial studies or history and prepare an assessment to share with the students at the outset.

**Materials Required:**

1. Student copies of the Historical documents in Section 2.12 Primary Documents herein and the assignment appropriate for the grade
2. Teacher may choose the documents they want their students to examine
   1. Suggested Documents: Decree Of The Communist Party And The Soviet Government Prohibiting The Departure Of Starving Peasants From Ukraine And The Kuban
   2. Decree Of The Central Government Of The Ussr: “On The Protection Of The Property Of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, And Cooperatives, And On The Consolidation Of Public (Socialist) Property”
   3. Correspondence Stalin To Kaganovich Aug. 11, 1932
   4. Decree of The Government of USSR Condemning Ukrainization For Difficul­ties In Grain Procurement

**Set-up Required:**

organize groups of 5-6 students each

* 1. prepare chart paper for recording student findings and displaying them to the class **Note**: Teachers may wish to designate the reading and analysis of a histori­cal document as a pre-task activity followed by:
  2. • the viewing of a film, reading literature, an essay, a task with the reading of a historical essay, viewing of a film as the pre-task activity. **For example**: DVDs, excerpts from literature, newspaper articles, etc.

## PRE-TASK ACTIVITIES

**teacher It is recommended that the teacher analyze a document with the entire class to model expectations. Only then should students attempt to analyze a document on their own. This type of modeling is crucial whenever a new skill is introduced.**

## TASK

1. Have students take on roles within the group (leader, presenter, recorder, ob­server, timekeeper, etc.)
2. Have students analyze the document as outlined for their grade level. The pre­senter reports the findings to the class, which are recorded on the blackboard or on a paper chart.

### Analysis of a Historical Document

FOR GRADES 6-8

[Excerpt From *Holodomor in Ukraine, The Genocidal Famine 1932-33:*

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*Work in groups of 5-6 students each. Divide the group roles among yourselves (leader, recorder, presenter, observer, timekeeper). Analyze the document using the questions below. The presenter reports the findings to the class, which are recorded on the black­board or on a paper chart.*

*Each group may receive the same document to work on, or different documents (See 3.2.5-3.2.8) from the same time period.*

#### Stage 1 Analysis of a historical document

1. Who is the author of the document?
2. Is it a single individual or a group of people?
3. What can we learn about the author’s position, social class, nationality, and political views from the document?
4. What is the date and location where the article was written?
5. For whom was the document intended?
6. What do we learn about the times from this document? (5 items)
7. In your opinion, is the document credible? Why or why not?
8. Is the language of the document easy to understand?
9. Is it addressed to more than one individual? Explain.
10. What main ideas are expressed in the document?

#### Follow up assignment for individual students:

1. Write a one-page essay using the information taken from this document, explaining what you learned about the Ukrainian Genocide in 1932-33 using the document studied. Use the terms *perpetrator, victim, rescuer, bystander* as is suitable.[ 177 ]

### Analysis of a Historical Document

FOR GRADES 9-10

[Excerpt From *Holodomor in Ukraine, The Genocidal Famine 1932-33:*

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*Work in groups of 5-6 students each. Divide the group roles among yourselves —lead­er, recorder, presenter, observer, timekeeper. Analyze the using the questions below. The presenter reports the findings to the class, which are recorded on the blackboard or on a paper chart.*

*Each group may receive the same document to work on, or different documents from the same time period.*

#### Stage 1 Analysis of a Historical document

1. - Who is the author of the document?
2. - Is it a single individual or a group of people?
3. - What can we learn about the author’s position, social class, nationality, and political views from the document?
4. - What is the date and location where the article was written?
5. - For whom was the document intended?
6. - What do we learn about the times from this document? (5 items)
7. - In your opinion, is the document credible? Why or why not?
8. - Is the language of the document easy to understand?
9. - Is it addressed to more than one individual? Explain.
10. - What main ideas are expressed in the document?

#### Stage 2

1. - What is the purpose of this document?
2. - Is it a convincing document, logically outlining its position?
3. - Does it entertain?
4. - Is it emotionally charged? Select words that illustrate this.
5. - What is the genre of the document? (Formal/official, letter, etc.)
6. - Is it correctly presented, with punctuation etc.?
7. - What are your general impressions about the document?

#### Follow up assignment for individual students:

Write a one-page essay using the information taken from this document, explaining what you learned about the Ukrainian Genocide in 1932-33 using the document studied. Use the terms *perpetrator, victim, rescuer, bystander* as is suitable.

### Analysis of a Historical Document

FOR GRADES 11 AND 12

[Excerpt From *Holodomor in Ukraine, The Genocidal Famine 1932-33: Teaching Materials for Teachers and Students* – By Valentina Kuryliw]

*Work in groups of 5-6 students each. Divide the group roles among yourselves—lead­er, recorder, presenter, observer, timekeeper. Analyze the document using the ques­tions below. The presenter reports the findings to the class, which are recorded on the blackboard or on a paper chart.*

*Each group may receive the same document to work on, or different documents from the same time period.*

#### Stage 1 Analysis of a historical document

1. - Who is the author of the document?
2. - Is it a single individual or a group of people?
3. - What can we learn about the author’s position, social class, nationality, and political views from the document?
4. - What is the date and location where the article was written?
5. - For whom was the document intended?
6. - What do we learn about the times from this document? (5 items)
7. - In your opinion, is the document credible? Why or why not?
8. - Is the language of the document easy to understand?
9. - Is it addressed to more than one individual? Explain.
10. - What main ideas are expressed in the document?

#### Stage 2

1. - What is the purpose of this document?
2. - Is it a convincing document, logically outlining its position?
3. - Does it entertain?
4. - Is it emotionally charged? Select words that illustrate this.
5. - What is the genre of the document? (Formal/official, letter, etc.)
6. - Is it correctly presented, with punctuation etc.?
7. - What are your general impressions about this document?

#### Stage 3

1. A critical analysis of the document. Use your imagination – how important is this doc­ument? Be skeptical. Is it telling the truth? What evidence is presented to support its claims? What other points of view might there be on the subject under discussion?
2. - What can you learn about the society from which it came? (5 things)

* What were their values/beliefs?
* What was important to them?

1. - What does this document mean to me?
2. - What have you learned / be sure to examine it by looking at concepts like perpetrators, victims, bystanders, rescuers, henchmen.

#### Follow up assignment for individual students:

1. Write a one-page essay using the information taken from this document, explaining what you learned about the Ukrainian Genocide in 1932-33 using the document studied. Use the terms *perpetrator, victim, rescuer, bystander* as is suitable.