Using “HIPPO” for Document Analysis

Ask yourself the following questions when addressing each component. Some sources will not have readily available answers to every question and will require you to make educated inferences based on what you know from history.

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| **H**istorical Context:  -Where and when was the source created?  -Explain any (relevant) historical events that occurred around the year of the source being published.  -Was the document created as a reaction to some event, person, policy, etc.? |  |
| **I**ntended Audience:  -To whom is the piece directed?  -Is it aimed at one person, a small group, large group, specific demographic (type) of people?  -Does their motivation to reach a target audience have an impact on the reliability or the accuracy of the source? |  |
| **P**urpose:  -Why was the source produced?  -What was the author trying to accomplish with their document?  -Were there other possible motivating factors for creating the source? |  |
| **P**oint of View:  -What is the main idea?  -What point is the author trying to make?  -How does the creator’s background or position in society impact their message? (think race, class, gender, age, region, occupation, values, motives, etc.) |  |
| **O**utside Information:  -What outside “specific, factual information” is relevant to understanding the document? \*Outside in this case means it cannot be found within the document or source information\*  -What class content from the notes, textbook readings, essential terms, etc. can be used to make connections with this source? Explain the connection. |  |