

Oral History

Five steps with guiding questions to help you understand and analyze the primary source

1 Identify the Source	When was this oral history created?
	Where was this oral history created?
	Who created or sponsored the oral history?
2 Place the Source in Context	What is the historical context for this oral history? What is the background or reason for it?
	Is there an introduction or narration accompanying this oral history? Are there images or music?
3 Analyze the Source Content	Who is the subject of this oral history?
	What is the story the speaker is conveying? What is the speaker's central message?
	What type of language does the speaker use?
4 Assess the Source Perspective	Does the speaker have a particular bias or perspective?
	What do you think the speaker hoped to accomplish with the oral history?
	How do you think viewers would react to the oral history? Would everyone have the same reaction?
5 Evaluate the Source	Why was this oral history important at the time it was created, and why is it important now for what it can tell us?
	Does comparing this oral history with other sources, past or present, provide valuable insight?
	How can you tie this oral history into key themes, questions, controversies, and debates?