G.1: Written Communication Assignment

Sample 1

A primary source is something from the time and place you are studying. To analyze a primary source historically, you need to understand all of the following:

CONTEXT: the historical situation in which the primary source was produced. CONTENT: the major point or meaning of a primary source in its historical context. CONSEQUENCES: the effects or significance of a primary source in history.

Each student must turn in four short written assignments this semester based on your research and interpretation of your choice of documents from The Past Speaks primary source reader. The due dates are outlined on the course calendar.

First, choose a document from The Past Speaks appropriate to the unit of study. I will convey this in each unit’s assignments.

For each paper, there must be at least one outside source utilized in order to explain the context in which the document was written. (See above for what context means)

In an essay of at least a page address the following questions to the best of your ability. Do not rewrite the questions in your paper. Answer them in paragraph form using the questions as guidelines.

1) Who wrote the document?
2) When was the document written? What can the document tell us about society at the time it was written?
3) Why was the document written? What sort of function did it serve? Was it perhaps written in response to a particular kind of problem? If you think that it was, what might the problem have been?

Most importantly, how does the document add to the textbook reading of the events surrounding its creation?

4) Cite your sources in a separate works cited section. A reader should be able to tell where you are getting your information. Do this with parenthetical references. For example, (Jones, 23). It is better to have too many than too few citations. However, don’t quote long passages from the documents. Use an ellipsis “...” if you need to quote.

For a primary source, cite the author of the document, not Jacobson. That is the person who collected the primary source. Consult a style manual for proper citation format or consult me.

Thanks to Scott Wade for allowing use of this sample.