

Primary Source Analysis Worksheet: Documents of Displacement

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Step 1: Observe

Look closely at your assigned document. Write down everything you notice (big or small).

What type of document is it? (passport, certificate, photograph, letter, etc.)

What details stand out to you (names, dates, stamps, handwriting, clothing, language, official seals)?

What emotions or impressions do you get just from looking at it?

Step 2: Contextualize

Think about the bigger picture.

Who might have created this document?

What purpose did it serve?

What does this document reveal about the person or family's identity, religion, or culture?

What larger historical events or forces might have shaped why this document exists?

Step 3: Infer

Now, read between the lines.

What challenges or struggles might this person or family have been facing when this document was issued?

What story is being told — and what story might be missing or silenced?

How do you think the person or family felt about having or needing this document?

Step 4: Connect

Make broader connections.

How does this document reflect the immigrant or refugee struggle?

In what ways does it show resilience, identity, or survival?

If future generations only had this one document to understand this family, what would they know? What would they not know?

Step 5: Reflect (Individual Writing Prompt)

Choose one of the following to write about in a short paragraph:

1. Imagine you are the person/family in this document. Write a brief diary entry about how you feel as you prepare to flee your home.
2. Explain how this document helps you understand the human impact of persecution and forced migration.
3. Compare this document to what you know about modern immigration today. What has changed, and what has stayed the same?