

Unit One: Assignment 1: Evaluating Sources

Learning Goal

You will look at four different sources (short readings) about the British Empire. You'll try to figure out who wrote them, why they wrote them, and how trustworthy these sources are. You'll also compare the different opinions you form and decide what you think really happened.

Step 1: Read the Sources

Read each of the following sources carefully. You may need to read each one more than once. Pay attention to the **tone** (friendly, angry, proud, etc.), the **author**, and what they are saying about the British Empire. Then answer all of the questions.

Source A: History Textbook (Published 1855)

"The civilizing influence of the British Empire brought order and progress to the savage lands. The peoples of these regions, though primitive in their customs, were grateful for the benevolence of Queen and Country. British soldiers and administrators, through great toil, extended the blessings of commerce and Christianity to all corners of the world."

1. **Who is speaking or writing in this source?**
(For example: a teacher, a politician, a newspaper writer, a local farmer.)
2. **What are they saying about the British Empire?**
(Are they saying it's a good thing, a bad thing, or something else?)
3. **What do you think they want the reader to believe?**
(Are they trying to convince us of something?)

4. **Do you trust this source? Why or why not?**
(Think about when it was written and who wrote it.)

5. **Does this source agree or disagree with the others? Explain.**
(Say which other sources it matches or contradicts.)

6. **Who is speaking or writing in this source?**
(For example: a teacher, a politician, a newspaper writer, a local farmer.)

7. **What are they saying about the British Empire?**
(Are they saying it's a good thing, a bad thing, or something else?)

8. **What do you think they want the reader to believe?**
(Are they trying to convince us of something?)

9. **Do you trust this source? Why or why not?**
(Think about when it was written and who wrote it.)

10. **Does this source agree or disagree with the others? Explain.**
(Say which other sources it matches or contradicts.)

Source B: London Times Editorial (1897)

“The Empire is the pride of Britain, a living testament to our national strength and moral superiority. While other nations squabble and retreat, Britain builds. In India, Africa, and beyond, our flag flies over lands now governed with justice and law. Though critics may protest, it is clear: the world is better under British guidance.”

1. **Who is speaking or writing in this source?**
(For example: a teacher, a politician, a newspaper writer, a local farmer.)

2. **What are they saying about the British Empire?**
(Are they saying it's a good thing, a bad thing, or something else?)

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Step 2: Big Picture Thinking

Now that you've looked at all the sources, answer the following questions to think more deeply about them collectively.

1. **Which source do you think is the most trustworthy? Explain.**
(Think about who wrote it and how honest or biased it feels.)

2. **Which source feels the most one-sided or unfair? Explain.**
(Did any source leave out important information or seem to push only one view?)

3. **Do all the sources tell the same story about the British Empire? Why or why not?**
(What are some of the major differences between them?)

4. **Whose voices are we missing? Who else might have something important to say about the Empire?**
(Think about workers, women, children, Indigenous people, or others affected by the British Empire but who don't have a voice or power.)

Step 3: Your Interpretation

Use your answers from above to write a short paragraph (100 to 300 words) answering the following question:

Based on the sources, how did different people feel about the British Empire, and what do you think we should believe today?

In your paragraph:

- Use at least two sources to explain what people thought at the time
 - Show that different people had different views (positive and negative)
 - Say what you think and explain why you believe that
 - Print clearly and try to avoid information, spelling and grammatical errors
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