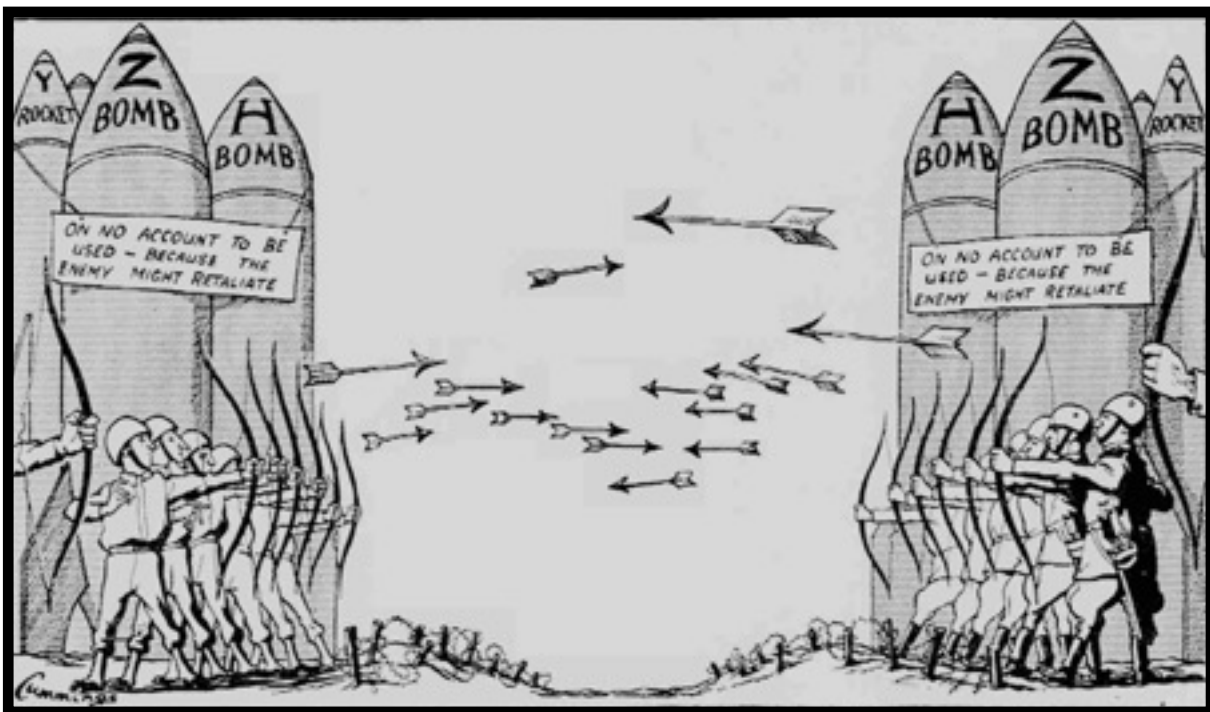


# How To Tackle SOURCES

## A GUIDE FOR GCSE



- ✓ Explore different types of sources: **Page 2**
- ✓ Evaluate strengths + limitations of different types of sources: **Page 3**
- ✓ What to do in the Exam: **Page 4**
- ✓ Different types of questions: **Page 5**
- ✓ How to 'follow up' a source: **Page 6**
- ✓ Top-tips for exam success: **Page 7**

# TYPES OF SOURCES

## STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

### 1. Photographs

- ✓ Allows us to see the past in ways other sources cannot
- ✗ People or items could be posed to deliver a certain message

### 2. Diaries

- ✓ Written in private so likely to be an honest account – not propaganda
- ✗ Only one person's opinion and experience
- ✗ May have been written in the hope that it would be discovered – is the person writing likely to do this?

### 3. Eyewitness account written at time

- ✓ Can help historians to understand what it was like to be there or what actually happened
- ✗ Only one person's experience – more useful when backed up with own knowledge

### 4. Eyewitness account written after an event

- ✓ Can be used carefully with own knowledge which can allow us to analyse the accuracy of the account
- ✗ Factors such as memory loss or misremembering may affect the reliability of the account especially if written many years after the event

THINK

Some photographs may have been taken for propaganda purposes...

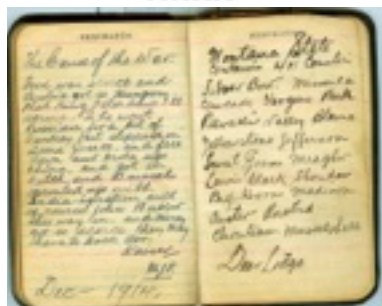


German children pictured reading anti-Jewish propaganda, 1938.

THINK

How close to the event was the account written?  
Does this affect how useful the source is? What type of witness is this person – were they directly involved or just an onlooker?

THINK



Who was the diary written by?  
Did they witness the event themselves or are they recording rumours?

### 5. Newspapers

- ✓ Newspapers can present useful information from the time which often contains reliable facts
- ✗ Newspapers often have a one sided or political view

### 6. Newspaper Cartoons

- ✓ When used with own knowledge they can often reveal the mood of some of the nation and their attitudes towards current events
- ✗ Often aim to entertain, meaning that they cannot be relied upon for real facts

### 7. Statistics

- ✓ Can offer unbiased facts and provide useful information
- ✗ How representative are the statistics? E.g. "nine out of ten women say..." – can these nine women represent the whole population?

### 8. Letters

- ✓ Similar to diaries - offers the true and private thoughts of an individual.
- ✓ Not likely to be censored if not from a controlled environment e.g a country at war or under a dictatorship
- ✗ Can sometimes be censored e.g in letters from soldiers at the front line in WW1

# In THE Exam

## THE QUESTIONS

*Where you will find source based questions:*

### Paper ONE (Medicine in Britain, c1250–present), Section A.

**2a** “How **USEFUL** are sources \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ for an enquiry into \_\_\_\_\_? Explain your answer, using Sources \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ and your knowledge of the **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**” (8 Marks)

**2b** “How could you **FOLLOW UP** Source \_\_\_ to find out more about \_\_\_\_\_?” (4 Marks)

(i) What I can infer:

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Details in the source that tell me this:

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### Paper THREE (Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39)

#### Section A

“Give two things you can **INFER** from source \_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_ ...” (4 Marks)



### Section B

**3a** “How **USEFUL** are sources \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ for an enquiry into \_\_\_\_\_ ...? Explain your answer, using Sources \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ and your knowledge of the **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**” (8 Marks)

**3b** Study Interpretations \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. They give different views about \_\_\_\_\_. What is the main **DIFFERENCE** between these views? Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations.” (4 Marks)

**3c** “Suggest one reason **WHY** Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about \_\_\_\_\_, you may use Sources B and C to help explain your answer.” (4 Marks)

**3d** How far do you agree with Interpretation \_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_? Explain your answer, using both interpretations and your knowledge of the **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**” (20 Marks - 4 for SPAG)



# How To Tackle... THE QUESTIONS



## What The Question Is Asking You To Do:

**“Useful”:** Does the source offer relevant information for the enquiry you are being asked about?

- ✓ Is the information relevant and reliable? Can you trust it?
- ✓ To understand this, you must use both **NOP** and **CAT** which are explained on the next page.
- ✓ Think: *is the source reliable? Is the source biased? Does the source match up with what you already know to be true?*
- ✓ Think of the **type of source** it is, and its strengths and limitations. All of these things affect how **useful** a source is in helping a historian understand a time period.

**“Historical Context”:** When a question asks you to bring in your own knowledge of the historical context, it will either be to:

- ✓ Compare what the source is saying to what you already know
- ✓ Or explain why you agree or disagree with an interpretation - e.g you would disagree with an interpretation if your own knowledge tells you it is false
- ✓ In both cases, the question is asking you to bring in your own knowledge in order to **analyse** the source or the interpretation
- ✓ Historical context will help with deciding whether a source is useful. If your own knowledge tells you a source is false, then it is less useful.

**“Difference”:** When you are asked to explain the differences between interpretations, you should:

- ✓ Look for the overall message of the interpretations. What information are they giving you, or what are they saying?
- ✓ You can then explain how the information or message differs between interpretations. For example, one interpretation may suggest that life in Nazi Germany was positive, and another may explore the downfalls of life in Nazi Germany.

**“Why”:**

- ✓ **NOP** is especially useful for understanding why interpretations would be different.
- ✓ Think of who wrote the interpretation, or their motivations for writing it. For example, accounts of Nazi Germany would be different between an every day man or woman and a member of the Nazi Party.
- ✓ Time can also affect this, if the person wrote it many years after an event they may have different viewpoints to someone who wrote an account at the time.
- ✓ Difference in experience or opinion can help explain why interpretations would be different.

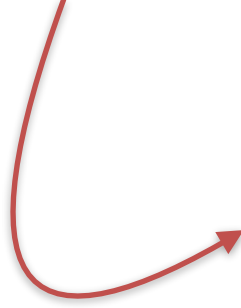
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## How To ... NOP

**Nature:** What **type** of source is it? (Think back to page 1, and the strengths and limitations of different types of sources)

**Origin:** Where does the source come from? Who wrote it? When and where was it published? Is the author likely to be one-sided? Is the author likely to have a good knowledge of events?

**Purpose:** Why was the source created? Did the person have a specific motivation, e.g a propaganda poster? Thinking of the type of source here is also useful. Is it *likely* that a diary would have been written for propaganda purposes?

*Nature, Origin and Purpose, would affect how **useful** a source is, and also would explain **why** sources can differ in opinion on the same topics. **NOP is therefore useful for questions 2A, 3A, 3B, and 3C.***

## How To ... CAT

*Use **CAT** when asked to include your own knowledge of a historical context, or when you are evaluating the usefulness of a source.*

**Comprehensive:** does the source have any limitations or does it miss anything out? (e.g. anything from your own knowledge that the source **should** mention but it doesn't)

**Accuracy:** Does the source match your own knowledge on the topic? Does it get anything wrong?

**Typical:** Is the source describing something which was typical, e.g. happened frequently or can represent a wider trend? Or is what is being described unusual and not typical of the time? Your own knowledge of the period will also help here.

*Comprehensiveness, accuracy and typicality will be useful for **questions 2A, 3A, and 3D.***

# How To... FOLLOW UP A SOURCE

Question **2b** on Paper One will ask you to **'follow up' the source** you looked at in question 2a in order to find out more about the enquiry you have been given (e.g. a study into the quality of life in the Weimar Republic). Here's how to tackle this...

Detail in Source A that I would follow up:
Question I would ask:
What type of source I could use:
How this might help answer my question:

You will be asked to fill in this table in the exam



Practice makes perfect with this question!

## STEP 1

**Detail you will follow up:** Make sure the detail that you pick is linked to the enquiry you have been asked to explore, which will be the same as the enquiry in 2a and will be stated again in the question. What does the source mention that could be explained further or researched more? For example, if a source from a soldier mentions how his friends died from shelling, you could follow up the death rates from shelling in WW2.

## STEP 2

**The question you would ask:** Follow the above trail of thought and make sure your question is relevant to the detail you have chosen to follow up. For example, in this case, you could ask "what were the actual death rates from shelling in WW2"

## STEP 3

**What type of source I could use:** Think about where this information is likely to be, and then choose carefully. Think back to how to decide how **useful** a source is. A Newspaper may have reported on the death rates due to shelling, but the information would also be in government or national army records. Which would be more useful and reliable for answering your question?

## STEP 4

**How this might help answer my question:** When you have chosen the type of source you would use, think about **why** you chose one source over the other. For example, if you had chosen the national army records instead of a newspaper report, you could explain that records would be accurate and would not have other motivations like newspapers would (for example, lowering the death figures in order to keep up public morale).

# TOP TIPS



## for Exam Success

- ✓ When analysing a source to decide how useful it is, remember to not be overly negative about the source. The focus of your answer should be what is useful about the source: what it can tell you, and why this information can be considered reliable or accurate, use NOP and CAT for this. Do explore possible limitations to show that you can critically analyse a source, but remember to start and end your answer with positive points about how the source can be seen as useful.
- ✓ Every source can be useful in its own way - even if NOP tells you that a source is biased or unreliable, e.g if a source from Nazi Germany portrays Jews in a negative way, which your own knowledge tells you is inaccurate and unreliable. Whilst it cannot tell you anything reliable about what Jews were like at the time, the source can still demonstrate how some German people were negative towards Jews and wanted to create propaganda.
- ✓ Jot down tables in the exam. This will be useful for deciding how useful a source is, and also for exploring the difference between interpretations. This will help you create a balanced answer when deciding how useful a source is, and will help you compare the main points in different interpretations so you can see the differences between them.

<i>Useful</i>	<i>Not useful</i>

<i>Interpretation 1</i>	<i>Interpretation 2</i>

- ✓ **Practice!!!** The more sources you look at, the better prepared you will be.