

## Analyzing Sources

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Below are a primary source and a secondary source provided to help you develop the skill of analyzing evidence. The questions after each source provide a sequential thought process to analysis. Record your responses to the analysis questions in the spaces provided below.

### **Analyzing a Primary Source**

“Being earnestly requested by a dear friend to put down in writing some true relations of our late performed voyage to the north parts of Virginia [Massachusetts] I resolved to satisfy his request. . . .

“Coming ashore, we stood awhile like men ravished at the beauty and delicacy of this sweet soil. For besides diverse clear lakes of fresh water . . . meadows very large and full of green grass. . . .

“[This climate so agreed with us] that we found our health and strength all the while we remained there so to renew and increase as, notwithstanding our diet and lodging was none of the best, yet not one of our company (God be thanked) felt the least grudging or inclination to any disease or sickness but were much fatter and in better health than when we went out of England.”

-John Brereton, *The Discovery of the North Part of Virginia*, 1602

### **Content**

What is the main idea of this passage?

### **Author’s Point of View**

Who is the author?

What gives the author the right or authority to speak on this issue?

What is his point of view about the north parts of Virginia?

What other beliefs or points of view might the author have based on this excerpt?

**Author's Purpose**

Why did the author create this document at this time?

What is the author intending to explain with his document?

**Audience**

Who was this document created for?

How might the intended audience affect the contents of the document?

**Context**

What other events are occurring at the time this document was written?

How might the context affect the author's point of view?

**Limitations**

What is one limitation of either the excerpt or the author's point of view?

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**Analyzing a Secondary Source**

“Why did the English found colonies and make them stick? For most the goal was material. . . . For some the goal was spiritual. . . . But all the colonists who suffered perilous voyages and risked early death in America were either hustlers or hustled. That is they knew the hardships beforehand and were courageous, desperate, or faithful enough to face them, or else they did not know

what lay ahead but were taken in by the propaganda of sponsors. . . . In every case colonists left a swarming competitive country that heralded self-improvement but offered limited opportunities for it.”

- Walter A. McDougall, *Freedom Just Around the Corner*, 2004

### **Content and Argument**

What is the main idea of this excerpt?

What is the interpretation of events argued for in this excerpt?

### **Author's Point of View**

Who is the author?

What gives the author the right or authority to speak on this issue?

What is his point of view about the English colonies?

Why might a different historian have a different point of view? Provide an example of a differing point of view.