

Using Historical Thinking to Develop Effective Historical Arguments: CONTEXTUALIZATION

Historical Reasoning Skill #4

What is it: Analyze the context of historical events, developments, or processes.

Student should be able to:

- Identify and describe a historical context for a specific historical development or process.
- Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context.

Underlying Questions:

- What was happening at the time the event happened, or the document was created that might have had an influence?
- What was happening at the specific place where an event occurred? In the country as a whole? In the larger region?
- How does a specific event relate to larger processes? How do larger processes shape a specific event?
- How does the context in which a source is read or viewed inform how it is understood?

Why questions are significant for analysis:

- To understand the historical situation of both large events and processes as well as specific documents and sources to contextualize why and event or process occurred.
- To understand why things happened the way they did.
- **Context is different than causation**-not focused on specific events or actions that may have caused another event or action to occur, instead it is the **larger constellations of developments and processes** that may not have served as direct causes but may have INFLUENCED ITS COURSE
- Operates on many different levels-LOCAL to GLOBAL, INTRAregional to INTERregional
- Understanding the historical situation that a source was created is crucial in making sense of PRIMARY SOURCES and SECONDARY SOURCES.