**WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET**

1. **ITEM IDENTIFICATION** (Fonds, Accession, Box, and File #s and title or description):

2. **TYPE OF DOCUMENT** (Check one):
   - Newspaper/article
   - Letter
   - Memorandum
   - Press Release
   - Advertisement
   - Postcard
   - Map
   - Email
   - Diaries/Journals
   - Report
   - Screenplay
   - Manuscripts
   - Government document
   - Legal records
   - Financial records
   - Book
   - Magazine/article
   - Sheet music
   - Identification document
   - Other: ___________________

3. **UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT** (Check one or more):
   - Interesting Letterhead
   - “RECEIVED” stamp Explain: ____________________________
   - Handwritten
   - Typed
   - Seals
   - Notations
   - Other

4. **DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:**

5. **AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:**

   **POSITION (TITLE):**

6. **INTENDED AUDIENCE?**

7. **MAKING SENSE OF THE DOCUMENT:**
   A. What is the document talking about? Write one sentence summarizing this document.
   B. List three things the author said that you think are important.
   C. Why did the author write this document? What was the occasion for its creation?
   D. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.
   E. Does the author have a thesis? State it in one sentence.
   F. What is at stake for the author in this text?
MAKING SENSE OF THE DOCUMENT (cont’d):

G. Is the author responding to an argument or position or concern that is not clearly stated? Give an example. In detail, explain what you think the argument/position/concern might be.

H. What can the author’s choice of words tell you? What about the silences? What does the author choose to not talk about?

I. Can you detect any biases in the source?

J. How does the source compare to other primary sources you have looked at?

8. EVALUATION AND USE:

A. Is there anything about the source that surprised you?

B. Does the source appear to confirm or disconfirm your prior knowledge of the topic?

C. What research questions does the source raise?

D. What research questions does the source help you to answer?

E. List as many arguments about your topic that this source can help you support.

F. Can the source be used to support any opposing arguments? How so? What pieces of evidence in the document allow it to be used to make opposing arguments?

G. What other primary or secondary sources do you think would help you to make one of the arguments listed above? Where/how would you find these?

H. What research question(s) does the source not help you to answer?

I. What was the significance of the source at the time it was created?

J. Do the ideas and values reflected in the source appear to differ from the ideas and values of the present? Give two examples.

K. How might this source support or refute one of the arguments you have encountered in course readings?

L. How would this source support, challenge, or revise other scholars’ approaches to the topic?

M. Negative evidence. Is there any missing evidence, or evidence you expected to find in the source but did not? (Note: this question might best apply to the range of materials you are looking at as a whole rather than a single document)

* Adapted from primary source worksheets created by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC.