

AP World History Reading & Interpreting Primary Sources

SOAPSTone (**S**peaker, **O**ccasion, **A**udience, **P**urpose, **S**ubject, **T**one) is an acronym for a series of questions that, when answered, will help you to interpret primary sources effectively.

Who is the Speaker?

The voice that tells the story.

What is the Occasion?

The time and the place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing. Writing does not occur in a vacuum. All writers are influenced by the *larger occasion*: an environment of ideas, attitudes, and emotions that swirl around a broad issue. Then there is the *immediate occasion*: an event or situation that catches the writer's attention and triggers a response.

Who is the Audience?

The group of readers to whom this piece is directed. It may be one person or a specific group.

What is the Purpose?

The reason behind the text. Students need to consider the purpose of the text in order to develop the thesis or the argument and its logic.

What is the Subject?

Students should be able to state the subject in a few words or phrases.

What is the Tone?

The attitude of the author. The spoken word can convey the speaker's attitude and thus help to impart meaning through tone of voice.