

Exercise 1: Guidance for Teachers

Looking at the Source

The point of this exercise is to get the students thinking about how to analyse something they read. It's not enough to just write down what it says; they have to think about other things too! Go over the questions on the Source Analysis page in the WHAT TO ASK section.

What to Ask:

1. **Who is writing?** If you don't know their name, do you know what their job is? **What does this tell you about the source?**

The source is a newspaper column – written by a journalist. What do the students know about professional journalism? Get them to think about the difference between a journalist writing a report versus a member of the public, or someone with a different job. The students should think about the media – can the media always be trusted? Can they think of examples where you can/can't trust what's in the media? What does this mean for the source they're reading? Should they question it, or not? [ALWAYS question sources!!]

2. How objective or impartial is the writer? To know this, look at the *title* of the newspaper. Is it likely to be positive about reform and social change, or negative? **Read the text all the way through.** Is it positive or negative? What does this tell you about how objective or trustworthy the source is?

*The source is an extract from the London Dispatch and People's Social and Political Reformer. Do the students know what a 'Reformer' is? Do they understand the difference between Left-wing and Right-wing politics? Chances are, anything reported **positively** in a Left-wing newspaper like the Reformer is going to be about social change and political change, benefiting working class people. They are probably not going to report bad news about the meetings, and will want to portray the Chartism Movement in a positive light.*

3. When was it written? Is it reporting contemporary events, or did they happen a long time before the source was written? How might that effect the source?

The newspaper is reporting on contemporary events, so probably by eyewitness accounts, and the journalists were present at the time of the meetings taking notes. It's more likely that they recorded things accurately because they were there, but they probably didn't see or

hear **everything** that went on. They only had a small amount of space to write up their report too, so they may have left things out!

4. What sort of source is it? Professional? Legal? Religious? Political? Informational? Is it just one thing, or does it have several uses?

The source is a newspaper column, so it's professional not personal – it's political, too, and is meant to inform its readers about the Chartist Movement.

5. Where does it come from? Why is it reporting these events – what's the connection?

It's a London newspaper reporting on events in Wales. One of the speakers (Mr Vincent) was from London and appears as a speaker in a few of the meetings, but also the paper is interested in reporting news from the Chartist Movement because it's a huge political protest movement that is gathering thousands of people in its support and marches to London are being planned.

6. Why was the source written?

It was written for an audience of people who are probably also Left-leaning in terms of their political beliefs, and who probably also support social reform, to inform them about the Chartist Movement and to give a good impression of the meetings and the amount of support it had. (It's worth noting that if you disagreed with the ideas in a newspaper, you probably would choose not to read it! So the majority of readers of the paper will agree with what it says. Therefore, it's not likely to be very balanced?? << Good idea to discuss this, again using modern media as an example!).

7. What problems are there for a modern reader? Which parts of the source are hard to understand? What extra information might you need in order to fully understand what the source is telling you? How can you get this information?

*Get the students to think about the language used – is it easy to understand? If not, why? Do they need dictionaries to help them? **If you don't understand what a source is saying, you will get a false idea about the past and the events that it's describing.** If you don't know a lot about Chartism, is that a problem? How can you find out more? [Read up on it; go to a library and look up books; use the internet to help – see the Google Advanced Search walkthrough exercise in the **Research Skills** section of the site].*