

# What did Americans know about Kristallnacht?

Being a historian is a lot more than just remembering dates, names, and facts. Rather, being a historian is a lot like being a detective. Many historians begin their search with a **big question**; this is what he or she would like to learn about our past. It could be something that no one has ever researched before, or a question that thousands of people throughout history have tried to understand. To seek the answer, a historian must find sources through research, determine their reliability through interrogation, and finally **weave together a logical and plausible story based upon the facts in front of him/her**.

Afterward, many historians go on to construct an argument and write an article or book on why their interpretation of the events is the most accurate.

In this multi-part lesson, **you will have the opportunity to become a historian**. The big question that you are trying to answer is: What did Americans know about the Holocaust?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Article: \_\_\_\_\_

## Primary and Secondary Sources

When historians work toward answering a question, they read both primary and secondary sources to create a well-rounded, and informed interpretation of the event.

In your own words, what is a **primary source**?

Name some examples of primary sources:

- 
- 
- 
- 

In your own words, what is a **secondary source**?

Name some examples of secondary sources:

- 
- 
- 
-

## Primary and Secondary Sources

What questions do you think you should ask when working with a primary source document?

What questions do you think you should ask when working with a secondary source document?

What kinds of information might you get when working with a primary source that you would not get with a secondary source?

Why do you think historians use both primary and secondary sources?

## Reading a Primary Source Document

Reading a primary source document is different from reading a textbook. When reading a primary source, you must ask questions to determine a source’s argument, bias, and reliability. All of these questions stem from: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How and Which. Use the graphic organizer below to help guide your understanding of your primary source:

<b>WHO?</b>	Who wrote the article?	
	Who do you think was the target audience?	
<b>WHERE?</b>	Where was the article published?	
	Which newspaper published it?	
<b>WHEN?</b>	When was the article published?	
	What was the historical context?	

## Reading a Primary Source Document

<b>WHAT?</b> <i>(What is the author trying to say?)</i>	What is the topic of the article?	
	What is the author saying about the topic (the argument/main idea)?	
	What is one sentence from the article that summarizes this main idea?	

## Reading a Primary Source Document

<b>HOW?</b> <i>(How does author construct his/her argument?)</i>	What words does the author use to describe the topic?	
	What evidence does the author use to support his/her main idea?	
	How is this primary source different from the secondary source you read?	

## Reading a Primary Source Document

<b>WHY?</b> <i>(How does the author feel about the topic? Why did the author write this article?)</i>	Is the author biased towards the topic?	
	What is the author's attitude toward the topic?	
	What was the author's goal in writing this article (to persuade, to inform, etc.)?	

## Reading a Primary Source Document

In order to craft a deeper and more accurate answer to the big question, historians use multiple resources. Historians often compare these sources, looking at what information in them is different and what is shared. **Find another pair within your class that has a different article than you and make a group.** Within your group, share the information about your articles and then fill out the Venn diagram below:

