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

**Guidelines for Studying History**

**What is History?**

**History is an account of the past.**

• Accounts/narratives differ depending on one’s perspective.

• We rely on evidence to construct our accounts of the past.

• We must question the reliability of each piece of evidence.

• Any single piece of evidence is insufficient.

• We must consult multiple pieces of evidence in order to build a plausible account.

**The following will help you examine historical accounts and artifacts.**

**Sourcing**

Before reading the document ask yourself:

* Who wrote this?
* Is this a primary or secondary source?
* Was the purpose of the source meant to be private or viewed by the public?
* What is the author’s point of view? Does the author express a bias?
* Why was it written?
* When was it written? (A long time or short time after the event?)
* Is this source believable? Why? Why not?

**Imagining the Setting** **(Contextualizing)**

* What else was going on at the time this was written?
* What was it like to be alive at this time?
* What things were different back then? What things were the same?
* What would it look like to see this event through the eyes of someone who lived back then?

**Close/Critical Reading**

* What claims does the author make?
* What evidence does the author use to support those claims?
* How is this document supposed to make me feel?
* What words or phrases does the author use to convince me that he/she is right?
* What information does the author leave out?

**Cross-Checking (Corroboration)**

* What do other pieces of evidence say?
* Am I finding the same information everywhere?
* Am I finding different versions of the story? (If yes, why might that be?)
* Where else could I look to find out about this?
* What pieces of evidence are most believable?

