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| **Source Type** | **Possible Values** | **Possible Limitations** | **Questions that we might ask of the source** |
| **Statistics** | Government information about economics/military performance etc - factual details. | Government origin - possible distortions. trying to convince people of a certain situation (ie. success of Stalin's industrialisation drive etc etc). | Purpose? |
| **Memoirs/ personal recollections/ diaries** | Personal insight into a key event based on firsthand experience.Important people in the events might give their perspective on what happened - key actors give their views. | Subjective experience of one aspect of events - caught up in the moment, no overview of events.Political opinions of the viewer can impact their judgement - not a balanced view. Emotionally partisan.Recalling from a later date means that the person's views might have been affected by knowledge of later events, new interpretations of what happened.Memory as unreliable!Motives in producing memoirs etc - i.e. trying to justify actions or policies (politicians and statesmen aware that their diaries will be read later!) | Is this a person who was important to the events?Has there been a big time gap between the events and the person describing their account of them? |
| **Maps** | Show how producers of the map want you to see that part of the world - what is the Israeli view of the territories in the region?Visually show any historic changes in the territorial boundaries of the region. | Politically motivated not just 'showing things as they are'. | Who made the map and why? Are there significant place names - how are these detailed? |
| **Diplomatic documents - official government records** | Insight into government decision making, and views of leaders/key players, in important events.Intentions of leaders! | Only selected documents are published - government are unlikely to release things that make them look bad! Often intended to defend and justify any actions or policies taken. | Purpose of document! Why did the government publish them? |
| **Cartoons (and possiblyart)** | Firsthand reactions to events as they are happening and unfolding - contemporary insight into a particular country's response. | Tend to oversimplify events they describe - can only use images and limited amount of text!Subjective response to events - not representative - only gives views of one cartoonist/newspaper, not the whole population!Tend to exaggerate and ridicule - propaganda? | Who produced it? When? Other events that might have influenced the portrayal in the cartoon? |
| **Newspapers** | Firsthand reactions to events as they are happening and unfolding - contemporary insight into a particular country's response.Journalists who witnessed events? | No hindsight or overview - just short-term view, no larger perspective.Very partial and politically subjective - only gives account based on perspective of country/ political viewpoint of paper. | Where is the newspaper based? When was the article published - directly after events? Who is the target audience of the paper? |
| **Photographs** | Documents events at first-hand - communicates powerfully in a visual format. | Photos can be staged for propaganda purposes! They can also be clipped and edited (i.e. removal of Trotsky). | Why was it taken? etc etc |
| **Speech** | Clear insight into a leader's intentions or opinions on a particular issue.Shows how leaders try to communicate and persuade people of their point-of-view - i.e. style and strategies of persuasion. | Propaganda and unbalanced: purpose to persuade, can any of it be trusted really? How far were these policies actually put into practice? | Purpose and context of the speech: who is the audience? |
| **Freelance Writer** | "It is written in 2005 and is therefore up-to-date and has the benefit of hindsight having access to many sources." From IB markscheme, Nov 2010. | "It is written by a Western freelance writer and (researcher who may not read or speak Arabic or Hebrew). The writer is not an academic historian and there is no information given about his professional background, which may make his account less objective." From IB markscheme, Nov 2010.Non-historian - might lack skills to produce a detailed account based on evidence, etc. | What are the credentials of the author on this subject? Do they have the skills/background/authority to speak on the topic?Where and when was the source published?Are there language issues - i.e. access to foreign documents, translations etc?Does the title of the book reveal anything about its range and scope? |
| **Academic historian** | "It was published very recently by an acknowledged expert. It is an in-depth study of the history of the region." From IB markscheme, May 2010.Title could be very specifically focused on the topic in question - look carefully at the title!Could provide a new perspective on the events, based on new evidence or new ideas on what happened - look at title and contents of the source. | Can favour a particular side in the events, depending on background and perspective of the historian!Perhaps the title of the work indicates it is more general, and will not focus in specific detail on topic involved.Does the date of the work suggest it might be slightly 'out-of-date' now - i.e. more recent events might have made the argument less relevant, or newer interpretations might have challenged the historian's views. | Academic credentials of the historian? Background of the historian - politically, nationally, etc?Are there language issues - i.e. access to foreign documents, translations etc?Does the title of the book reveal anything about its range and scope? |
| **School textbook** | Can provide an accessible overview to a topic, if written by teaching experts with academic training in the subject.If a textbook from a single-party state or belligerent nation, can show how government want children to view a particular event. | Aimed at school children, lacks thererfore in-depth analysis and serious academic discussion.If from an SPS/belligerent (i.e. Israel or Egypt etc), extremely unbalanced sources as propaganda - unlikely to give both sides of any argument etc etc. | Where is it from? Title of the textbook? |