Written Document Analysis

1. General information
   A. Type of document
      ○ Newspaper ○ Memo ○ Press Release ○ Advertisement ○ County record
      ○ Letter ○ Map ○ Report ○ Telegram ○ Other
   B. Unique physical characteristics of the document (check one or more)
      ○ Handwritten ○ Interesting letterhead ○ Notations ○ Other
      ○ Typed ○ “Received” stamp ○ Seals
   C. When was the document created?
   D. If indicated, where was the document created?
   E. What is the document about?

2. Author and audience
   A. Who is the author or creator of the document? If indicated, what position did they hold, or what is their title?
   B. Who was the intended audience for the document?

3. Historical context
   A. What are the historical contexts for the document? Consider contexts such as events, ideas, economic, political, religious or social movements, technological innovation.
   B. List two things the document tells you about life in the U.S. (or some specific location) at the time it was written.
      (i)
      (ii)

4. Language
   A. Consider the question of bias. Keeping in mind when the document was prepared or created, does the document’s language suggest that the author has particular biases and/or assumptions about race, class, gender, religion, ideology, or something else? Cite specific examples from the document.
   B. How does the document’s language translate to the 21st century? Does the language used indicate that particular vocabulary or grammatical constructions have changed? Are there any specialized words?
5. **Thesis statement**
   A. List three things the author wrote that you think are important.
      (i)
      (ii)
      (iii)
   B. Why was the document written?
   C. What evidence helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.
   D. Summarize the author’s argument/purpose for writing the document in a single sentence.
   E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

6. **Researcher’s bias**
   A. Why did you select the document?
   B. What assumptions or biases do you have that might have affected how you analyzed the document?

7. **Additional research**
   A. Use a search engine to see if you can find any additional information about the author that might be helpful (e.g., author’s background, education, age, residence).
   B. Use a search engine to see if you can find any additional information about historical context that might be helpful.