Name: _____ (   )   Class: _____   Date: _____

Raffles Institution
2021 Year 3 Social Studies
Source-Based Case Study Guide

Inference Questions
"What does the source tell you about…?"
"What is the message of the source?"

Analysing the source
To make an inference ask yourself: What is the source trying to tell you indirectly? Then use that information to make an <u>intelligent guess</u> about what it is trying to say. Understand what the source is *trying to say* based on the actions, metaphors and perspectives found in it.

Writing your answer
You will need to look at the details for content. Remember to use the <u>evidence in the source</u> to support your answer, and explain how the evidence helps you to derive at the inference.

E.g. The source tells me that (MESSAGE). This is supported by (evidence), which shows that (explain how the evidence has helped you arrive at the message).

Purpose Questions
"Why do you think this source was published?"
"What is the author's purpose in creating this source?"

Analysing the source
You are required to infer the intended outcome the author expects from conveying the message to their specific audience. Hence you need to identify and examine the following:

- **Provenance** and **Context**: *Who said this? <u>When</u> and <u>where</u> was this said? <u>What was happening</u> when the source was made?* Consider the origin of the source by looking for details in the provenance text and background information. Look for descriptions of who the <u>author</u> is, the <u>type/medium</u> of the source (public speech, private correspondence, newspaper article, blog post, etc.), and the historical context in which this source was made—pay attention to stated <u>dates</u> (year, date, time) and <u>other events</u> taking place at the time that the source was made. Source origin matters because it gives us a clue about who the target audience is and the most likely intended outcome.

- **Audience**: *<u>For whom</u> was this meant?* Infer this with the provenance and context you have identified, and name a <u>specific group</u> (e.g. the general public, the Government, voters, retirees, etc.). Correctly identifying the audience is essential to an accurate intended outcome.

- **Message**: *<u>What</u> does this source say?* Infer the main idea of the source from the main body text of the source, and <u>explain</u> your inference with <u>evidence from the source</u> (relevant quotes or specific descriptions of a cartoon/picture). Be careful to distinguish between what is literally presented in the source and the meaning you infer from it.

- **Intended outcome**: *<u>Why</u> was this source made? How did the author want the audience to <u>respond</u>? What did the author want to see <u>happen</u> (immediately and eventually)?* This refers to how the author wants the audience to <u>react</u> after reading the source—not just how

they should <u>think or feel</u>, but also what they should <u>do</u> (what <u>action they must take</u>) in order to bring about the author's <u>desired outcome</u>. Remember that an accurate intended outcome must correctly identify the audience, and must be supported by the context of the source.

<u>Writing your answer</u>
Explain purpose by incorporating the points that you have identified earlier using the PCAMI framework. You may explain the message of the source in a separate paragraph, or as part of your purpose explanation.

E.g. The source says (MESSAGE), supported by (evidence). Given that the source was made by (PROVENANCE), and considering that (CONTEXT), the purpose of the source is to (VERB) (AUDIENCE) that (MESSAGE), so that (INTENDED OUTCOME).

Note: While you should use an appropriate <u>verb</u> to describe what the author is attempting to do with the audience, a common mistake students make is to assume that the verb itself (e.g. "convince", "persuade", "encourage", "warn", etc.) is the purpose. Also remember that correctly identifying the message, audience and context is vital to correctly inferring intended outcome.

Reliability Questions
"How reliable is Source X in…"
"How far can you trust Source X in…"

<u>Analysing the source</u>
You are required to assess whether the source can be trusted by considering if what it says can be corroborated with facts, and if the author is biased by having an ulterior motive or though their tone. Hence you need to identify and examine the following:

- **Message**: *<u>What does this source say?</u>* Infer the main idea of the source from the main body text of the source, and <u>explain</u> your inference with <u>evidence from the source</u> (relevant quotes or specific descriptions of a cartoon/picture). Be careful to distinguish between what is literally presented in the source and the meaning you infer from it. Note that you cannot actually assess reliability from message alone.

- **Cross reference (CR):** *How is what this source says <u>supported or refuted</u> by other sources/my contextual knowledge?* Identify which other source (or contextual knowledge, if relevant) <u>supports/corroborates/reinforces</u> what the source is saying; conversely, also identify which other source (or CK/background information) <u>challenges/refutes/contradicts</u> what the source is saying. If the source is supported by other sources/CK, then it becomes more reliable/trustworthy. On the other hand, other sources/CK that challenges what the source says makes it less reliable/trustworthy. Choose only relevant and unbiased sources (i.e. no strong tone or obviously one-sided). Also, if you are told to refer to specific sources ("Study Sources P, Q and R"), then you are expected to use them.

- **Purpose**: *Does this source have a <u>motive/hidden agenda</u>?* Evaluate the source for purpose (using the approach outlined above), but in addition to identifying the intended outcome, consider how the author (or the organisation he/she represents) <u>might benefit/stand to gain</u>. Having such a motive/hidden agenda limits the reliability of the source because it reveals vested interests.

- **Tone**: *Does this source have a <u>biased tone</u>?* Consider if the source uses <u>loaded language</u> (i.e. strong/emotive words, exaggeration/hyperbole, sarcasm, etc.), which might suggest that the author has a biased stance on the issue, which limits the reliability of the source.

Writing your answer
Explain reliability by first cross referencing, then identifying purpose and/or tone. It helps to start with an inference of the message of the source, before moving on to cross referencing – alternatively, you may incorporate your inference of source message in your CR paragraph. Note that more comprehensive answers that examine both perspectives will score better.

E.g. Source X tells me that (MESSAGE), which is supported by (evidence). It is reliable because it is supported by Source Y, which also says (MESSAGE), as shown by (evidence). Source X is hence made more reliable because what it says is corroborated by Source Y.

However, Source Z challenges what Source X says… (elaborate and justify)

The reliability of Source X is also limited by of its purpose/tone... (elaborate and justify with PCAMI or evidence for tone)

Notes: Remember to answer the question by clearly stating at the end of each paragraph if the source is made more reliable or limited in its reliability (or trustworthiness – use the term stated in the question). Also note that purpose and tone may not always be present in a source; the reliability of some sources can only be tested with cross-referencing. Finally, remember that the intended outcome you identify must be shown to benefit the author (or his/her organisation) in order to qualify as motive/hidden agenda. Merely having an intended outcome without vested interests does not necessarily make a source less reliable.

Usefulness Questions
"How useful is Source X as evidence about…"

Analysing the source
You are required to assess whether the source is useful by considering if what it says can be corroborated with facts, and if the source is reliable (whether the author is biased by having an ulterior motive or though their tone). Hence you need to identify and examine the following:

- **Message**: *What does this source say?* Infer the main idea of the source from the main body text of the source, and explain your inference with evidence from the source (relevant quotes or specific descriptions of a cartoon/picture). Be careful to distinguish between what is literally presented in the source and the meaning you infer from it. Note that you cannot actually assess ~~reliability~~ from message alone.

- **Cross reference:** *How is what this source says supported or challenged by other sources/my contextual knowledge?* Identify which other source (or contextual knowledge, if relevant) supports/corroborates/reinforces what the source is saying; conversely, also identify which other source (or CK/background information) challenges what the source is saying by providing missing perspectives/alternative points of view. If the source is supported by other sources/CK, then it becomes more useful. On the other hand, other sources/CK that challenges what the source says makes it less useful. Choose only relevant and unbiased sources (i.e. no strong tone or obviously one-sided). Also, if you are told to refer to specific sources ("Study Sources P, Q and R"), then you are expected to use them.

- **Purpose**: *Does this source have a motive/hidden agenda?* Evaluate the source for purpose (using the approach outlined above), but in addition to identifying the intended outcome, consider how the author (or the organisation he/she represents) might benefit/stand to gain. Having such a motive/hidden agenda limits the reliability of the source because it reveals vested interests, and would thus conceal some perspectives that may be detrimental to its argument.

- **Tone**: *Does this source have a biased tone?* Consider if the source uses loaded language (i.e. strong/emotive words, exaggeration/hyperbole, sarcasm, etc.), which might suggest that the author has a biased stance on the issue, which limits the reliability of the source.

Writing your answer

Explain usefulness by first cross referencing, then identifying purpose and/or tone. It helps to start with an inference of the message of the source, before moving on to cross referencing – alternatively, you may incorporate your inference of source message in your CR paragraph. Note that more comprehensive answers that examine both perspectives will score better.

E.g. Source X tells me that (MESSAGE), which is supported by (evidence). It is useful because it is supported by Source Y, which also says (MESSAGE), as shown by (evidence). Source X is hence made more useful because what it says is corroborated by Source Y.

However, Source X is less useful because it has a missing perspective that Source Z presents… (elaborate and justify)

The useful of Source X is also limited because it has a purpose/tone and is hence unreliable... (elaborate and justify with PCAMI or evidence for tone)

Note: While usefulness questions seem very similar to reliability questions, they are not identical – the key difference lies in how sources that challenge the given source do not have to contradict it, only show a missing perspective/different POV. Other than that, evaluate the source the same way you would for reliability—generally speaking, what makes a source reliable also makes it useful, and vice versa. Do note that an unreliable source can still be a useful source, depending on the question; while a biased perspective is less useful as evidence about the truth, it can still be useful as evidence of diverse opinions existing in society.

Comparison Questions

"How similar/different are sources A and B?"
"How are Sources A and B similar/different?"

Analysing the source

You are required to compare the differences and similarities of the given sources. Hence you need to identify and explain how the sources are alike and/or differ in terms of provenance, content, tone and purpose.

- **Provenance**: *Who said this? When and where was this said? When the source was made?* Consider if the sources come from two different speakers, or from the same speaker at a different time and place/event.

- **Content:** The content of the source refers to what the source is saying - in other words, the **message** of the source. When comparing content, make sure to clearly state your basis of comparison.

- **Tone:** This refers to the emotions reflected in the source. Consider if the source uses loaded language (i.e. strong/emotive words, exaggeration/hyperbole, sarcasm, etc.), which might suggest that the author has a biased stance on the issue. Evidence of tone are usually (but not always) in strong adjectives. Literary devices such as repetition, imagery and even the use of punctuation marks such as exclamations can also indicate the tone of the source.
    Words to describe tone include: "angry, hostile, accusatory, threatening, persuasive, convincing, friendly, neutral…"

- **Purpose:** This refers to the <u>motive</u> of the source—the specific objective the author wants to achieve <u>with his target audience</u>. Purpose is not about just intent, but rather what the author wants his target audience to think, feel or do. Remember to support your intended outcome with the context of the source.

Writing your answer
Your answer should as far as possible include the following:
- A clear basis of comparison
- The extent to which the sources are similar or different.
- Consideration of both similarities **and** differences.
- Clear explanation supported by evidence from source.

When comparing purpose and/or tone, care must be taken to clearly state and justify the intended outcome using evidence from the source. Comparisons of tone or purpose usually require a higher level of thinking. Marks are awarded based on perspective (one sided vs. balanced) and level of analysis (provenance vs. content vs. tone vs. purpose).

E.g. Source A and B are similar/different in the way they agree/disagree that (BASIS OF COMPARISON). Source A tells me (MESSAGE) which is supported by (EVIDENCE). This implies that (EXPLANATION). On the other hand, Source B tells me (MESSAGE) which is supported by (EVIDENCE). This implies that (EXPLANATION).

Sources A and B have different purposes. In Source A, the author is trying to (VERB) the (AUDIENCE) that (MESSAGE) so that the they will (INTENDED OUTCOME) given (CONTEXT). However, Source B has a different purpose as Source B's message to the (AUDIENCE) was (MESSAGE), so that the (AUDIENCE) will (INTENDED OUTCOME) given (CONTEXT).

Comparison FAQs

Q: Can we just do similarity in content and difference in tone/purpose (and vice versa)?
A: Yes, as long as you ensure a balanced perspective.

Q: Why do some students choose to do both similarities AND differences in content as well as purpose? There is not enough time to write all three paragraphs.
A: This is a choice made by students who feel that they are not able to confidently explain purpose or tone, and hence decide to thoroughly evaluate content as a safety net.

Q: Why do we need a basis of comparison? Isn't it obvious what is similar or different based on the evidence?
A: It is not. A basis of comparison shows us that you understand how the sources are similar or different, and clearly identifying the basis of comparison is essential to a good answer. The basis of comparison (also known as comparison criterion) is like finding the common denominator of each source —something common about the inferences made.

E.g. 1: Sources A and B are similar because they agree that <u>multiculturalism was important for Singapore's success</u>. Source A opines that multiculturalism is a critical factor for improving social cohesion as explained and evident from … Source B strongly believes that multiculturalism brings about economic and political stability as seen from (evidence) which tells us that (explanation).

E.g. 2: Sources C and D differ in terms of their views on <u>how diversity could impact people</u>. Source C asserts that diversity could improve life as explained from this evidence … while Source D claims that diversity will destroy society by (explanation) as seen from (evidence).