

## SOAPS Document Guideline Sheet

**Purpose:** The SOAPS method will help you analyze when and where the author of a document, text, political cartoon, or picture is coming from and what his or her biases may be.

**Who is the Speaker?** \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the person who produced this piece (the voice that tells the story)? What is their background and why are they making the points they are making? Is there a bias in what was written or shown? If so, why? If not, why not?

**What is the Occasion?** \_\_\_\_\_

What is the time and place of the piece—the current situation? It is particularly important that you understand the context that encouraged the writing or creation to happen.

**What is the Audience?** \_\_\_\_\_

To what group of readers or viewers is this piece directed? The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group; it may be a certain person or certain people.

**What is the Purpose?** \_\_\_\_\_

What was the reason behind this text or picture? Examine the logic and any arguments being made. How does it connect to what we are doing today?

**What is the Subject?** \_\_\_\_\_

State the general topic, content, and main idea contained in the text or picture. Students should be able to state the subject in a few words or a short phrase.

## **OPTIC: A Strategy for the Analysis of Visuals**

In order to more fully and accurately understand the context, meaning, and purpose of a particular **visual** (such as artwork, a photograph, map, graph, etc.) a systematic method of analysis is required. One of those methods is explained by the acronym **OPTIC**:

**OVERVIEW**—Conduct a brief overview of the main subject of the visual (i.e., what is the primary scene, historical context, etc.) to determine a general theme or focus.

**PARTS**—Scrutinize the parts of the visual and note any elements or details that seem important. Make use of circling and dividing visuals into quarters.

**TITLE**—Read the title or caption of the visual (if present) for added information.

**INTERRELATIONSHIPS**—Use the words in the title or caption and the individual parts of the visual to determine connections and relationships within the graphic. How do the different parts of the visual work together? This is what brings the visual together into a single focus.

**CONCLUSION**—Draw a conclusion about the meaning of the visual as a whole. Summarize the message or primary meaning of the visual in one or two sentences.

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