

# How to do an American History validation of source:

Look at the italics under the source, these are your hints from Cambridge to assist you. You should also know materials about the major senators and presidents. You should look at the dates and know the chronology of the times, what happened before and after the date in question. Look in your notes for the cheat sheets and timelines. Cambridge expects you to know these things. Strong students will have memorized this material.

## Qualities to consider:

1. Tone
2. Date
3. Event
4. Two sided or one sided
5. Expertise
6. Audience
7. Medium

The validation should be at least a 2/1 or 1/2, but better a 3/2 or 2/3. None of the sources will be neutral. It is up to the writer to determine the source's ability to answer the question. This should be done with evidence, analysis, and evaluation. The evaluative judgement should link to the question.

## Samples:

**Question used for the samples:** “Lincoln’s election caused the South to secede.” Assess this statement.

*Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address 1860*

### Facts you could use as evidence:

1. Lincoln is campaigning for President, has not yet won the nomination
2. Politicians will say anything to be elected
3. This is in New York City, a complex mixture of immigrants and trade from all ports
4. He is speaking to supporters
5. He addresses slavery, how the founding fathers wished to not expand and hoped it would wither away
6. A measured argument without assessing blame
7. He speaks to northerners and southerners

### Validation:

Although campaigning and speaking to a sympathetic New York audience, Lincoln is addressing the issues of the Constitutional Fathers, addresses both the north and the south and the path they should

take, and he does chronical his ideas about slavery. This source directs the reader to see a knowledgeable politician in an election year who knows the inside thoughts and feelings of Lincoln, who is the source itself. The source illustrates a valuable and persuasive speaker yet the South sees what they want to see in his speech when he speaks of slavery.

**SAMPLE 2:**

*Horace Greeley, Republican Party Convention May 1860*

**Facts you could use as evidence:**

1. Founder of the Republican Party
2. Founder of the New York Tribune, Whig then Republican leaning
3. Pro westward expansion
4. Backed Lincoln against Seward
5. Spoke, wrote, and editor of northern newspapers
6. Widest circulation in the nation, mostly mailed copies

**Validation:**

Although a devoted Republican and backer of Lincoln, Horace Greeley has the pulse of the nation through his highly popular newspaper; furthermore, he understood the politics of Americans in the election year which is in question. The source has problems in answering this question due to the Republican focus of the author and his role in the formation of the Republican Party.

**SAMPLE 3:**

**Quote:**

Jefferson Davis

"I rise, Mr. President, for the purpose of announcing to the Senate that ... the state of Mississippi ... has declared her separation from the United States." He explained that his state acted because "we are about to be deprived in the Union of the rights which our fathers bequeathed to us." Davis implored his Senate colleagues to work for a continuation of peaceful relations between the United States and the departing states. Otherwise, he predicted, interference with his state's decision would "bring disaster on every portion of the country."

*Farewell Address of Jefferson Davis, 1861*

**Facts you could use as evidence:**

1. Senator and House member from Mississippi
2. January 1861
3. South Carolina already seceded, deep south leaving after this announcement
4. Slave owner
5. Hero in Mexican War
6. Secretary of War under Pierce
7. Believed in States Rights

**Validation:**

A lifetime of government service and a strong believer in states rights, the future president of the Confederate States in his farewell address is sad in tone but predicts the problems to come to his nation. His tone is measured but does not include Lincoln as the central problem that lead to secession. In the final assessment he is qualified to speak on the issue and is knowledgeable on the key issues precipitating secession.

**SAMPLE 4:****Quote:**

"For the comfort of secessionists who have denounced Lincoln for the "declaration of war" which they contend is contained in his inaugural speech, we copy the following extract from the National Anti-Slavery Standard of 9 March. This fanatical paper is a bitter against Lincoln for not declaring war as the secessionists are abusive of him for a pretense that he has declared war. The two extremes are acting together in favour of disunion.

The inaugural speech was made with the face turned towards the south and with both knees bowed down before the idol it worships. Lincoln should have plainly set forth the encroachments of slavery upon the rights of the North and shown how they had culminated in the disruption of the Union. He should have proclaimed his intention of stopping the encroachments and restoring the Union by the full exercise of all his constitutional power. Then he would have taken a position which even his enemies would have admired."

*From the Fayetteville (North Carolina) Observer, 14 March 1861*

Newspaper:

**Facts you could use as evidence:**

1. Southern (Upper South)
2. March 1861 is after the deep South has seceded
3. Tone is sarcastic
4. On topic
5. Has a vested interest to sell newspapers

**Validation:**

A southern voice from the inaugural month of the Lincoln's election who is speaking about all sides of the equation but with a very sarcastic tone to mock both sides. A southern newspaper reflects the resentment and confusion of Lincoln's election. This two sided comical approach well echoes the confusion of ideas that accompanies Lincoln's election and is a solid source to address the question.

## **Additional assistance:**

What if they are all from the same year? 1850, 1859?

This is when you need to know the chronology of an event. Ex. Compromise of 1850 - Introduced in January, hotly debated in March, re-introduced in June, and passed as five separate bills in August and September. If you know the actions you will know the source hints.

John Brown's Raid – happened in October, sentenced in November, and hanged in December

What if they are all Presidents? What party, when elected, what happened when in office, where are they from, are they states rights, is their party divided

What if they are all newspapers? Newspapers in small towns usually reflect the local readership and have a vested interest in selling the paper. Outrageous, sarcastic, measured, balanced, one sided

What if they are newspapers in big cities? Diverse port cities or big cities will reflect a diverse population not just northern or southern

What if it is a modern source? Knows the outcome, may be written by an expert, probably two sided, no vested interest in the immediate outcome, less passion as all are dead

What if it is a speech? Audience is important, speaker's background, wider audience, where the speech is given, formal or informal, during a campaign, issue discussed, events around the speech, tone, two sided

What if it is an image? When, where, comedy, serious, relevant to politics, who produced, intent

**Sources can be books, cartoons, political campaign posters, images, paintings, charts, personal letters, diaries, primary document, speeches, newspapers, persons, texts, poems, and songs**

**You have to memorize the political parties, chronology of events, key dates, presidents, laws, compromises, and critical events.**

**Do not just repeat the evidence they gave you it is a waste of time, they can see it too.**

**What if you know nothing, try to develop a rationale, but do not spend too much time on it.**

**Validation is more than presenting evidence, without analysis or evaluation of evidence your validation are just observations.**

**Each source must be validated. Remember validation is telling the reader why the source can answer the question on paper 1.**