## Sensational sources

## What does it tell us?

Once you have read and made sense of a document, you still need to work out what it tells us. This is not the same thing as what it says.

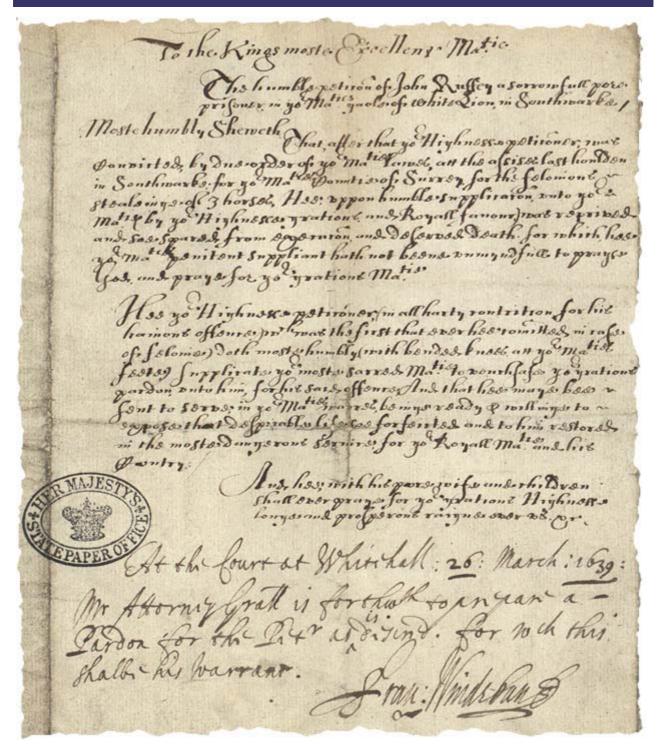
What it says	What it tells us
This is what the document gives us in terms of information.	This is what we can figure out from the document, often using other knowledge as well.
For example	For example
A document says that a Royalist commander has collected a certain amount of tax from an area.	The document about tax gives us an idea of how well supplied the Royalists were in that area. It can also help us understand why the Royalists were weak or strong in that particular area.

Look at this document. Study it carefully. What does this source tell us?





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## How well did you do?

What does it say? (simplified transcript)	What does it tell us?
To the King's most Excellent Majesty, This humble request of John Ruffey, a sad poor prisoner in your Majesty's jail of White Lion in Southwark,	The king's officials saw this letter, not the king himself, but the writer clearly wanted to be on the king's good side and was very polite and humble.
most humbly shows that Ruffey was convicted by order of your Majesty's laws, at this court held in Southwark for the county of Surrey, for stealing 3 horses. He, upon begging to your Majesty, was spared from execution and the death he deserved by Your Highness's kindness. For this he has been careful to praise God and pray for Your Gracious Majesty.	The man stole horses and that was clearly seen as a serious crime because the punishment was very tough – death. The sentence was not carried out and he was sent to jail instead.
He (very sorry for his awful crime, which was the first serious crime that he ever committed) does most humbly (with bended knee at your Majesty's feet) beg your most sacred Majesty to grant your gracious pardon to him for his crime. And let him be sent to serve in your Majesty's war. He is ready and willing to expose his worthless life, lost [sentenced to death] and then restored to him [spared from execution], in the most dangerous service for your Royal Majesty and his country.	Rather than stay in jail, the man wanted to be let out. In return, he would serve on the king's side in the war, doing any kind of dangerous service. At this time the king was facing a rebellion in Scotland and was trying to raise troops to fight the Scots. The thief would have known this, and so offered to join up and serve his country.
And he with his poor wife and children shall always pray for your gracious Highness's long and successful reign etc	
[Note] At this court at Whitehall, 26 March	His request was approved on 26 March 1639. He was to be given a pa don and sent to fight This

1639, Mr Attorney Grath is ordered to prepare a pardon for this man.

[Signed]

Francis Windbanke

pardon and sent to fight. This suggests that the king was having trouble getting enough men to be in his army, if he was willing to let criminals out of jail to fight for him. Were there lots of criminals in the king's armies or was this an unusual case? We would have to read more documents to find out.