ANALYZING A SECONDARY SOURCE

1. Identify the source and author.
   - Who is the author and what are his/her credentials?
   - Who is the audience?
   - Give the full citation:

2. Check it Out!
   A. Check out the Table of Contents:
      - Are there chapters that might relate to your topic?
   
   B. Check out the index:
      - Who are the key people?
      - What are the key events?
      - What are the key subjects?
   
   C. Check out the citations:
      - Are they based on primary sources or mostly other secondary sources?
      - Name one primary source collection the historian uses:
      - Name one primary source and one secondary source used that might help your research:
3. Figure out the Argument

- Read the introduction and conclusion. Find the sentence(s) in which the author states her/his thesis and note page number—then restate in your own words.

- How does the writer build her/his argument?

- If the author discusses others’ interpretations of the topic, who are the key scholars included?

- How does the author place her/his book in the “big picture”—what is the big historical question the work is addressing?

D. Use it!

- How might this book/article help your own research? State three specific ideas:

- What new questions about your topic did your source raise?