

Analysis of a Photograph

A. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- What is the first thing you notice about the photograph?
- Is the photo a portrait, a landscape, or a record of an event?
- What are the most striking details of the photo?
- Are there people in the photo? How many? What are they doing?
- On what person(s) or object(s) does it predominantly focus?
- What secondary person(s) or object(s) do you see?
- Is the picture posed or candid?
- Was the photo taken indoors or out?
- What features or objects could help determine where this photograph was taken?
- What features or objects could help determine when this photograph was taken?
- Is there anything unusual or surprising about the photo?

B. WHAT FACTS CAN YOU DETECT FROM STUDYING THE PHOTO?

- Record any writing you find on the face or back of the photo.
- Divide the photo into sections and look carefully at each section. What new details come into view?
- List any person, building, or object you recognize.
- List any person, building, or object that is identified.
- What is happening in the picture?
- What can you tell about the season and/or time of day this photo was taken?
- Are there items such as clothing, hairstyles, or automobiles that can provide clues to the year or historical period?

C. WHAT FACTS MIGHT YOU SURMISE AFTER CAREFUL STUDY?

- For what purpose do you think this picture was taken?
- Do you think the picture was taken by a professional or amateur photographer?
- Did the people in the picture know they were being photographed?
- A photograph can address only the sense of sight – if you had been present when the photo was taken, what might you also have heard, smelled, felt?

D. FURTHER STUDY

- What is missing from the photograph?
- What questions does the photograph leave unanswered?
- Where might you find answers to those questions?