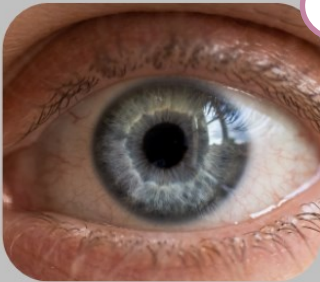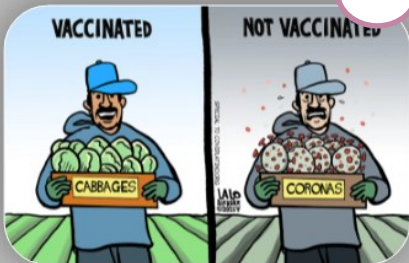|		
Historians	Letters / Diaries	Media - TV, Radio
Eyewitnesses	Memoir / autobiography	Biographers
Cartoons	Statistics	Photographs
Speeches	Government Records	History Teacher

Considering source Values (Strengths) and Limitations (Weaknesses)

Historians

Audience = students, researchers

Values (Strengths):
- Often professionals or an expert about certain historical periods or individuals.
- Have the benefit of hindsight.
- May create works based on a wide range of sources and data.

Limitations (Weaknesses):
- May be influenced by experience, nationality, political views, region or context.
- Expertise may not always match the subject they are dealing with.
- May have a very broad focus or a very narrow one therefore misses bigger picture.

Letters / Diaries

Audience = self / recipient

Values (Strengths):
- Great for understanding personal views and opinions - look for tone / language used.
- Can show how events impacted an individual.
- Can show reasons / motives for public actions.

Limitations (Weaknesses):
- Only gives individual opinions that may not represent government / public view.
- May be written to persuade the recipient (audience) .
- Could include opinions that changed later or clash with publicly stated views.

Media - TV, Radio

Audience = General Public

Values (Strengths):
- May help us understand popular views or public opinion.

Limitations (Weaknesses):
- Can be politically motivated and used as state propaganda or censored.
- May give a one-sided or narrow view that matches ideology of organisation.
- Often dramatic or sensational (exaggeration) to gain attention for profit.

Eyewitnesses

Values (Strengths):
- May have a unique perspective offering details that others don't have
- There / present at the time - close to the event or situation.
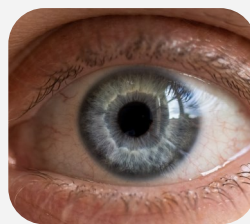
Limitations (Weaknesses):
- May be too close to the event, to understand the wider context.
- Eyewitnesses can easily misunderstand or misinterpret events.
- Can be emotional or contain bias due to being so close to events.

Note - the value of a source must be judged on what it is being used for!

Can offer insights into personal views and reveal reasons for public actions.

May have given author time to reflect and use hindsight to evaluate personal events.

Might show how the author wants to be seen by wider public.

Memoir / autobiography

Audience = public / 'fans'

Motivation for author to carefully curate their views on beliefs / actions.

Often written for the author to improve public image or sell their legacy.

Option to change opinions (with hindsight) based on reaction of their actions.

Will have studied the individual in detail - so may be considered an 'expert'.

Have the benefit of hindsight

May have used a variety of sources

Biographers

May be too involved - a 'fan' and therefore loss of objectivity.

Can be too focused on role / impact of subject at the expense of others.

May not have close access to subject or contemporary sources - see date / place.

May help us understand popular views or public opinion.

May provide a dissenting voice to actions of those in authority.

Can help break down complicated material into a more understandable form.
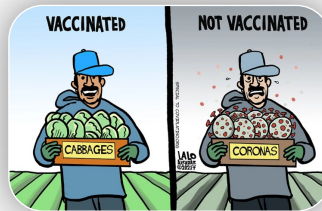
Cartoons

Audience = General Public

Often one - sided and without balance. Exaggerated or stereotyping?

Prone to political / national bias of the author.

Deliberately (overly) dissenting voice?

Can show correlations (links) between factors such as unemployment and voting.

Can show patterns or trends over time - such as economic growth / decline.

Helpful to make comparisons.

Statistics

Often gathered for specific purposes and can be 'cherry picked' or misrepresented.

May not gather a wide enough data set / in terms of number or region.

Easy to make incorrect correlations – e.g. shark attacks linked to eating ice cream!

May help bring a scene or event to life.

Can be staged.

May give an accurate snapshot of an event.

Only shows or omits (leaves out) what the photographer chooses.

Can show immediate impact of an event or how people reacted to it.

Can be selected and only show a snapshot of an event + not the wider story.

Photographs

Audience = public

May give a clear view on individual's position on an issue.

Often used to persuade the audience..

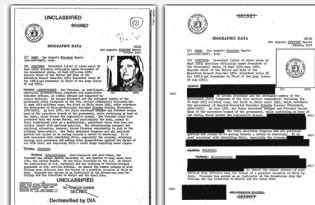Can show what the public has been told about an event or issue by a leader.

Key propaganda tool.

Look at language, tone, expression, exaggeration etc.

Speeches

Audience = public / supporters

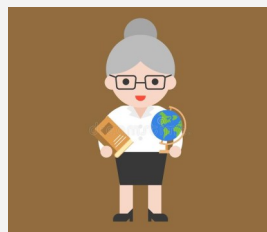May help us understand a government's view on an issue.

Unlikely to give a dissenting opinion or contrary argument.

Can provide details on reasoning or motives behind decisions.

Can be redacted or partly classified - only selected information available.

Government Records

Audience = Archives / public

History Teacher