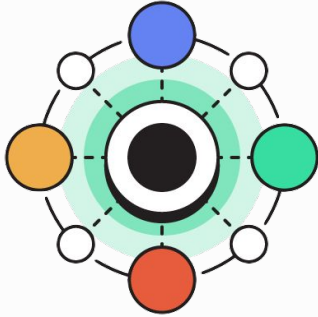


Formative Assessment: Contextualization and Sourcing



Thinking historically means interpreting historical events, developments, or processes in light of the surrounding historical context. It also means understanding key information about a historical source, such as its purpose, perspective, and reliability as a piece of evidence.

Directions: Read the following primary source. Then, answer the questions on contextualization that follow. The multiple choice questions for this formative assessment are Weighted Multiple Choice (WMC) Questions. This means that there is only one *incorrect* answer, but the other 3 choices are weighted. The *best* answer is 3 points, the *second-best* answer is 2 points, and the *third-best* answer is 1 point. The *incorrect* answer is 0 points.

Source: Alexander Hamilton, “Report Relative to a Provision for the Support of Public Credit,” January 9, 1790. [Library of Congress](#).

Note: Alexander Hamilton’s First Report on Public Credit, excerpted below, outlined his financial plan for the new United States Government. In it, he highlights the need for the federal government to take on debt and therefore establish public credit, as well as establish a national bank.

The Secretary of the Treasury [Alexander Hamilton], in obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives... applied himself to the consideration of a proper plan for the support of the Public Credit...

[T]he object of the proposed system is the firm establishment of public credit; that on this depends the character, security and prosperity of the nation; that advantages in every light important, may be expected to result from it; that the immediate operation of it will be upon an enlightened class of citizens, zealously devoted to good government, and to a liberal and enlarged policy, and that it is peculiarly the interest of the virtuous part of them to co-operate in whatever will restrain the spirit of illicit traffic; there will be perceived to exist, the justest ground of confidence, that the plan, if eligible in itself, will experience the chearful [sic] and prompt acquiescence of the community.



1. Each of the following statements is a historical fact that is related to the above document. Which historical fact *best* helps to contextualize the purpose of the above document? In other words, which fact *best* helps us understand why this document was written?
 - A. In 1789, Hamilton was selected by Washington to be the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.
 - B. Under the previously used Articles of Confederation, the power of the federal government was limited.
 - C. The U.S. had major domestic and international debts that led to a lack of creditworthiness in the eyes of investors.
 - D. The First National Bank was created in 1791.

2. Justify your choice in the space below.



1. Each of the following statements is a historical fact that is related to the above document. Which historical fact *best* helps to contextualize the purpose of the above document? In other words, which fact *best* helps us understand why this document was written?
 - A. In 1789, Hamilton was selected by Washington to be the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. **(2 points)**
 - B. Under the previously used Articles of Confederation, the power of the federal government was limited. **(1 point)**
 - C. The U.S. had major domestic and international debts that led to a lack of creditworthiness in the eyes of investors. **(3 points)**
 - D. The First National Bank was created in 1791. **(0 points)**

2. Justify your choice in the space below.

Choice C, worth 3 points, is the most helpful statement for contextualizing the purpose of the primary source. In it, we learn that the U.S. had major debts which sheds light on why Hamilton is making his economic proposals. Choice A is also helpful, and therefore worth 2 points. Hamilton's role as Secretary of the Treasury heavily influenced the creation of the financial plan. The answer, however, is not as explicitly as Choice C in why the country needed a financial plan. Choice B provides vague information about how the United States federal government may have gotten into its financial predicament, but this is heavily implied. Thus, Choice B is worth 1 point. Choice D, while true, occurred after the source was written and is an effect of Hamilton's proposal. It does not provide insight into the purpose of the source.



1. Weighted Multiple Choice

3 points (Choice C)	2 points (Choice A)	1 point (Choice B)	0 points (Choice D)
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

2. Short Answer: Justify Your Answer

3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
Student thoroughly justifies their choice of the <i>best</i> fact—which was worth three points as shown on the teacher key—that would help contextualize the purpose of the source.	Student thoroughly justifies their choice of either the 1 or 2 point option from the WMC question. OR Student’s justification of the 3 point option needs deeper analysis.	Student’s justification of their choice (either the 1 or 2 point option) lacks deep analysis.	Student either makes no attempt to justify their choice OR tries to justify the 0 point option.
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

Total: _____ / 6

