



The Fab Four Files

● What is a primary source?

Museum exhibitions present a variety of objects, documents, photographs and audiovisual elements in order to create a narrative about people, places and events. *The Beatles in Australia* exhibition features an abundance of these primary source materials to explore the story of The Beatles' Australian tour in 1964. In preparation for your visit to the exhibition, the following primary source analysis activity will help you to consider the types of questions that could be asked about source material on display in museum exhibits.

● How do I analyse the primary sources?

During your visit, John, Paul, George and Ringo are counting on you to investigate the stories behind The Beatles' tour and its impact on Australian society by analysing the documents, objects, oral histories and photographs featured in *The Beatles in Australia* exhibition.

The following activities will prepare you for The Fab Four Files analysis activities you will undertake on your visit to the exhibition.

● Analysing documents

The Beatles in Australia exhibition features a range of documents related to the tour in 1964 including letters, magazines and newspaper articles. Written documents are significant sources of information

for historians. They serve as direct evidence from a period in study and can tell us about everyday life as well as important events of the time. Considering elements such as the context, content, word choice and tone of the document can also be useful for determining the point of view and intentions of the writer.

Here is a link to an article from *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 18 December 1963 titled 'The boys behind those haircuts'. Answer the following questions with reference to this primary source.

BEATLES NEWSPAPER ARTICLE LINK —

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/imageservice/nla.news-page4976487/print>

Questions

What kind of document is this? How can you tell?

Can you tell when the document was written? Cite your evidence.

What is the purpose of the document?

What is the tone of the document (formal, informal etc)?

What information can be obtained from this document?

What reactions might the reader have after reading this article?

● **Analysing objects**

The exhibition features a range of objects related to the tour, including personal scrapbooks and Beatles merchandise and memorabilia. Museums use objects to tell stories and inform audiences about people, places and events. Examining objects on display in a museum can be difficult because we can't touch them and therefore fewer questions can be asked about them. Museum curators have an important role in interpreting objects for the viewer. Some of the questions that can be asked about objects to help gain a greater understanding of them and why they are on display are listed below.



Here is an image of Beatles dolls, produced in 1964. Answer the following questions with reference to this primary source.

Powerhouse Museum Collection. Photo by Peter Giaprakas

Questions

Describe the object.

What are your first impressions of the object?

What might the object have been used for? How can you tell?

What value might the object have for individuals or society at large?

Should this object be in a museum collection? Why or why not?

● **Analysing oral histories**

The exhibition features a range of oral histories related to the tour, including fan interviews and personal stories of individuals associated with aspects of the tour. Oral histories are useful sources for gaining personal accounts of people, places and events. They have the power to reveal an individual's feelings and opinions about the events with which they were involved. Oral histories can also present a challenge with regard to their reliability as accurate sources of information.

Here is a link to recorded interviews with people involved with The Beatles' tour, featured on the exhibition website. Listen to one of the recordings and answer the following questions with reference to this primary source.

<http://www.thebeatlesinaustralia.com/audio>

Questions

Who is speaking?

What topics is the interviewee discussing?

What emotions about these topics can be detected from the interviewee's responses?

What was the interviewee's role in the events he or she describes?

How does the interviewee's story fit into the broader history you are studying?

● Analysing photographs

The exhibition features a range of photographs related to the tour, including images of the arrival, fans and concerts in the four cities. Photographs are important visual records of a point in time. They have the ability to tell the viewer about individual and group behaviours, as well as help us to describe scenes and understand the resources available to groups at a particular point in time. Photographs can, however, be manipulated intentionally or unintentionally by the photographer or viewer in terms of the intention and interpretation of the image.



Here is a photograph of Australian Beatles fans. Answer the following questions with reference to this primary source.

Questions

Describe what is happening in the photograph.

Photo: Bauer Media Group/Glenn A Baker Archives

What are your first impressions of the photograph?

What assumptions can be made about Australian society in the 1960s from this photograph? Consider the technology, fashion etc. Cite your evidence.

Who do you think might have taken the photograph? Why?

Do you think any incorrect assumptions could be made from viewing this photograph? What are they?

Which is the best primary source: why or why not? Now you be the judge ...

In small groups or as a class, brainstorm the strengths and limitations of using documents, objects, oral histories and photographs as sources of historical evidence and complete the following table.

	Strengths	Limitations
Documents		
Objects		
Oral Histories		
Photographs		

The Beatles in Australia is presented by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, and Arts Centre Melbourne.

For more information on the exhibition
***The Beatles in Australia*,**
visit the Powerhouse Museum's website
<http://www.thebeatlesinaustralia.com/>


For more information about education support or your booking, contact Bookings at the Powerhouse Museum:
 Telephone — (02) 9217 0222
 Fax — (02) 9217 0622
 Email — edserv@phm.gov.au

Subscribe to Education enews

For updates about what's on for teachers including upcoming exhibitions and education programs subscribe to our Education enews email bulletin.
www.powerhousemuseum.com/education/teachersemailsignup.php

	500 Harris Street Ultimo PO Box K346 Haymarket 1238 www.powerhousemuseum.com
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

© 2013 Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. The design and images in this publication are copyright. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of research, study, criticism or review, or as otherwise permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission.

 Text may be used under Creative Commons Licence [Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 3.0 Australia](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/).

The Powerhouse Museum, part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences also incorporating Sydney Observatory, the Powerhouse Discovery Centre and the NSW Migration Heritage Centre, is a NSW government cultural institution.