

Suffolk University

## Digital Collections @ Suffolk

---

Moakley Archive OERs and Assignments

Open Educational Resources at Suffolk  
University

---

1-1-2014

### Primary Source Analysis Essay (student version)

Patricia Reeve

*Suffolk University*, preeve@suffolk.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.suffolk.edu/archive-oer>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Reeve, Patricia, "Primary Source Analysis Essay (student version)" (2014). *Moakley Archive OERs and Assignments*. 4.

<https://dc.suffolk.edu/archive-oer/4>

This Assignment is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources at Suffolk University at Digital Collections @ Suffolk. It has been accepted for inclusion in Moakley Archive OERs and Assignments by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Suffolk. For more information, please contact [dct@suffolk.edu](mailto:dct@suffolk.edu).



# WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2: PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS ESSAY

DEVELOPED BY PROFESSOR PAT REEVE, SUFFOLK UNIVERISTY

## STUDENT PACKET

### Contents

Page 1: Instructions

Page 3: Historical Background

Page 5: Primary Source

Page 7: Worksheet for Taking Notes on the Source

Page 8: Tips for Effective Writing

### Instructions

Primary sources are sources created by historical persons in the period being researched. (Contrast this with secondary sources, which are after-the-fact scholarly analyses of the past.)

For this assignment, you will write a two-to-three page analysis of the assigned source. Please use 12-point font with one-inch margins and follow the Chicago Style Manual as described in the Quick Guide that I distributed in an earlier class.

The purpose of this assignment is to hone the skills required to analyze a primary source. Your goal is to analyze your source excerpt as deeply and as thoroughly as possible. Do not simply provide a general summary or overview of your source. Think concretely and critically about the source content, its historical context, the historical/cultural values that shaped it, and its significance for our understanding of the Boston Busing crisis.

In structuring your essay, please address the following questions in the form of an essay. In other words, do not list your answers to these questions. Please see the writing tips posted at the end of this assignment. Note: you need not answer the questions in order, but be sure to address all questions that are relevant to the assigned source.

Your essay must be a polished piece of writing. Please spell check and proofread the 1st draft before revising it for submission. I will grade it for both content and style.

### Basic Identification

1. What type of source is it? (Newspaper article, map, letter, film, etc.)
2. When was it created?
3. Where was it created?
4. Who created it?

### Author's Intent – Answering the “Why?” Question

1. What is the author's place in society? (Profession, status, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
2. How might the factors listed in the question above shape the author's perspective in this source?
3. Why do you think the author created this source?
4. Does the author have an argument? If so, what is it?
5. Who is the intended audience for this source?
6. How might the intended audience shape the perspective of this source?

### Historical Context

1. Under what specific historical circumstances was this source created?
2. What larger historical events, processes, or structures might have influenced this text?
3. Is this source consistent with what you know about the historical record from that time?

### Content of the Source

1. What historical facts do you learn from this source?
2. What biases or other cultural factors might have shaped the message of this source?
3. How do the ideas and values in the source differ from the ideas and values of our time?
4. What historical perspectives are left out of this source?
5. What questions are left unanswered by this source?

### Relevance of the Source

1. What research question are you using this source to answer?
2. How might this source confirm or contradict issues raised in other primary sources?
3. How might this source confirm or contradict issues raised in secondary sources?
4. Does this source represent any patterns with other primary sources?
5. What does this source tell you about the history of the Boston busing crisis?

#### Historical Background

Source: “Perspectives on the Garrity Decision: Perspectives on the Garrity Decision: A Research Guide by the John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute,” John Joseph Moakley Archives and Institute, Suffolk University, Boston, pages 2-4.

## Background on the Garrity Decision and Forced Busing in Boston

School desegregation became a significant issue in Boston following the United States Supreme Court's decision in the 1954 case of *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.* (347 U.S. 483), which asserted that separate educational facilities for black and white students were inherently unequal, school districts were faced with the task of integrating their public schools. Despite the *Brown* decision and the enactment of the Racial Balance Act of 1965 in the state of Massachusetts, the Boston Public Schools largely remained segregated.

In response to the inaction, a group of black parents filed suit against the Boston School Committee, then led by James W. Hennigan, in the case of *Tallulah Morgan et al. v. James Hennigan et al.* (379 F. Supp. 410) on March 15, 1972. The suit claimed that the Boston Public Schools were deliberately segregated. The filing of *Morgan v. Hennigan*, some say, is linked to a Boston School Committee meeting on September 21, 1971 where the committee voted 3 to 2 against using busing to racially balance the new Lee School;<sup>1</sup> a vote in violation of the Racial Imbalance Act of 1965.

The "Garrity Decision" refers to the opinion on *Morgan v. Hennigan* filed by Judge Arthur W. Garrity on June 21, 1974. When the school committee failed to submit a plan, the court established a plan that called for Boston Public School students to be bused to schools outside their neighborhoods. The plan determined that "the racial balance in all citywide schools shall be reflective of the total student population in the Boston public school system, with a 5 percent leeway in white or minority enrollments. For example, white students represent 51 percent of the city's student, so white enrollment could number from 56 to 46 percent at any citywide school. Black and other minority students, who are 49 percent of the city's total school enrollment, may range from 54 to 44 percent of enrollment at individual citywide schools."<sup>2</sup>

Judge Garrity's desegregation plan was to be implemented in three phases. Phase I, which began on the first day of school September 12, 1974, involved redistricting, student transportation and the formation of parent-teacher-community involvement committees. This phase only applied to neighborhoods where whites and blacks lived near each other; the Charlestown, East Boston and North End neighborhoods were excluded.

Phase II, also known as "The Masters' Plan", was ordered to begin in September 1975, and included all areas of the city except East Boston. This phase involved a "a revision of attendance zones and grade structures, construction of new schools and the closing of old schools and a controlled transfer policy" with limited exceptions in order to minimize mandatory transportation.<sup>3</sup> Essentially students had two options: 1. to attend a school in their community district schools where the enrollment was determined by the school committee or 2. to attend a citywide school where they could list a preferred school in addition to other options if their desired school was unavailable. Opting to enroll in a community district school meant that the school committee determined where students went based on geocode and racial balance.<sup>4</sup> Phase II also linked universities, colleges and community groups to schools.

Phase III began in September 1977 and established the Department of Implementation which oversaw desegregation and the compiling of racial statistics of the Boston public schools

### **Congressional Elections**

Prior to the implementation of Judge Garrity's school desegregation plan, the controversy surrounding the issue of school desegregation found its way into the political arena. Many Boston residents were outraged that their children would no longer be able to attend local "neighborhood" schools and instead would be bused to unfamiliar areas of Boston. The issue was of great importance in South Boston, a largely white neighborhood of Boston, where voters would be taking part in the 1970 congressional elections to fill the seat vacated by John McCormack. Joe Moakley, a Democrat, ran for the open seat in 1970 but lost to another South Boston resident, Democrat Louise Day Hicks, in part because Hicks was a more outspoken critic of busing than Moakley. While Moakley expressed his dissatisfaction with the idea of forced busing, his stance was not as firm as South Boston residents would have liked. Moakley was able to win the 1972 congressional election by running as an Independent and therefore bypassing the need to beat Hicks in a Democratic primary. Once elected, Moakley switched back to the Democratic Party and went on to hold the seat for nearly thirty years. Many residents of South Boston never forgave him for his perceived failure to stop school desegregation in their community.

### **The Impact of the Garrity Decision: 1960s-1980s**

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, racial tension and violence escalated in Boston. In anticipation of a ruling on school desegregation, anti-busing rallies and protests were held at city hall and elsewhere around the city.

Elementary and high school students, already subject to long bus rides across the city, experienced rocks thrown at their buses, verbal harassment by people as they entered school buildings, and in some cases harassment by their peers and school administrators once inside the building. The stabbing of Michael Faith, a white South Boston High School student, by a black student inside the walls of the school is just one example of the violence that broke out between students.

Busing proponents and opponents were subject to harassment on a daily basis. Pro-busing activists experienced death threats and harassment by motorcades that hurled insults and rocks at their homes. An iconic image taken by Stanley Forman depicts violence at a rally in April 1976. In the photograph it appears that Ted Landsmark is being attacked with an American flag by anti-busing activist Joseph Rakes. The accounts of what actually happened between Landsmark and Rakes vary widely; ultimately Landsmark sustained injuries at the hands of other protestors that day. This image won Forman a Pulitzer Prize and catapulted Boston's race problems into the national spotlight.

South Boston was a hot bed of protest and violence. Boston policemen were initially assigned to protect South Boston High School but as the crowds and tension escalated, the National Guard and State Police were called in to maintain order. In his oral history interview Congressman Moakley, a resident of South Boston, recalls his treatment: "I was against busing too, but I just couldn't march in the streets and scream and holler like some of the people were doing it, and that cost me... On a Monday, I was picketed by six hundred whites. On a Tuesday, I was picketed

by six hundred blacks. ”<sup>5</sup> Many Boston families chose to move out of the city to the suburbs; this mass migration, commonly known as “White Flight,” began between 1950 and 1960.<sup>6</sup> Options for families who did not want their children to be bused and could not afford to move out of the city were slim. Families that could afford it sent their children to parochial school.

As the plan unfolded throughout the 1970s, students and parents gradually accepted forced busing and racial tensions eventually lessened. Judge Garrity continued to oversee most administrative functions of the Boston School Committee and to make decisions regarding schooling and desegregation. Although Garrity’s involvement ended in September 1985, the battle over schools and race continued in the federal courts into the 1990s.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. Boston School Committee hearing transcript,
2. 2 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report, 87.
3. Ibid., 77.
4. Ibid., 91.
5. Moakley, John Joseph, OH-001, 19-20.

**White Pupils' Rolls Drop A Third in Boston Busing: White Pupils' Rolls Decline a Third in Boston**  
 By JOHN KIFNER Special to The New York Times  
*New York Times (1973 Current file)*, Dec. 15, 1975  
 ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2010)  
 pg. 1

## White Pupils' Rolls Drop A Third in Boston Busing

By JOHN KIFNER

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, Dec. 14—The public schools here have lost at least 17,760 white students, nearly a third of the white enrollment, since court-ordered busing for school desegregation began 18 months ago.

Enrollment figures for the previous three years showed a slow, steady decline of about 3,000 white students a year, attributable to various demographic factors. The sharp acceleration in the decline started after Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr., finding the Boston school committee had deliberately maintained a segregated system, ordered busing in June 1974.

The departure of white students here is expected to be a major factor in the rapidly

growing and politically charged national debate over whether busing is leading to "white flight." At the same time, the experience here should also be evaluated in terms of purely local conditions, primarily Boston's history of parochial, ethnic neighborhoods in the decade of antidesegregation policies practiced by the elected, all-white School Committee.

As the end of the fall term approaches, Boston's second year of school desegregation presents a mixed picture.

There is continued resistance and racial hostility in the South Boston neighborhood, increased last week by Judge Garrity's order putting the high school there into "receivership." But there is a wary truce in areas troubled in the past.

There is a departure of many middle-class whites from the school system. But there is also a sense of excitement and innovation — rare in the Boston schools — among the black and white parents, children and teachers who have committed themselves to the new "magnet schools."

But the most striking development has been the drop in white enrollment, which more than accounts for an over-all enrollment decrease from 93,647 in the fall of 1973 to 76,461 in the current semester.

Private antidesegregation academies, following a Southern pattern, have been established in some white neighborhoods for white students. Many more have enrolled in Roman

Continued on Page 38, Column 3

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# White Pupils' Rolls Decline a Third in Boston Busing

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

Catholic parochial schools in the city and nearby suburbs. Some have gone to other established private schools. A number have dropped out of school.

The change has shifted what had been a predominantly white school system to one in which the majority is now non-white.

Significantly, the greatest decrease in the white enrollment and the greatest shift in percentage is the lower, younger grades.

In the fall of 1973, there were 53,593 white students in the kindergarten through 12th grade, according to the Boston School Committee's figures. There were 62,014 white students in 1970, 59,390 in 1971 and 55,893 in 1972.

In the fall of 1974, with the first stage of a desegregation plan that primarily affected the white South Boston and Hyde Park areas and the black Roxbury and Mattapan neighborhoods, the white enrollment fell to 44,957.

Last fall, with the citywide desegregation plan in effect, the white enrollment dropped to 36,243.

The black school enrollment, according to the school department figures, has declined slightly over these years, going from 31,963 in 1973 to 31,737 in 1974 and to 31,092 today.

In addition, the number of Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students has shown small, steady gains and today stands at 9,126, up from 8,091 in 1973.

In the high schools, whites are still in a slim majority, with 10,071 white students and 9,674 nonwhites. In the middle schools, there are 9,366 non-white students and 8,099 whites. In the elementary schools, there are 16,865 non-whites and 12,102 whites.

## A Question About Figures

There are some difficulties with the figures, which represent the school departments' projected enrollment. A number of sources say that, in the past, the over-all enrollment figures have been regularly inflated to get more Federal money.

However, while the projected enrollment for grades 1-12 (kindergarten students are not affected) is 72,201, only 66,175 have gone to school at least once.

This would appear to indicate that the rate of white departure might be more than the school department's projected enrollment figures show.

In addition, it appears that the unrelenting tension and hostility, particularly at South Boston High School, are driv-

ing many black students to transfer or drop out of school.

While the projected black enrollment at the high school's main building was 432 at the beginning of the year, no where near this number has ever attended, and, frequently of late, there have only been a few more than 100 blacks.

For whites in Boston, thus far, the avoidance of desegregation appears to have meant leaving the public school system rather than "white flight" from the city's neighborhoods.

At least four private, neighborhood academies have been set up. State education officials have complained that the schools are unaccredited and that students attending them should thus be considered truants. So far, however, local school officials have taken no action.

Some 400 students are enrolled in the South Boston Heights Academy, a project of the neighborhood's antibusing forces. One Sunday last fall, South Boston residents had an open house tour of the neat rooms with the students' work pinned to the walls and vowed continued defiance of the court busing order.

An examination of the school attendance pattern shows there were very few whites attending a number of elementary schools in white middle class areas of the city, such as West Roxbury, traditionally the home of, among others, successful upper level civil servants.

Despite an admonition last year by Humberto Cardinal Me-

dieros, Archbishop of Boston, that he would not let the Catholic school system become a "refugee" for those fleeing desegregation, many of these middle class parents, according to a number of sources, are sending their children to parochial schools in the area or in nearby well-to-do suburbs.

Similarly, many of the working class white parents in the Charlestown section are sending their children over the border into parochial schools—whose enrollment had been on the decline—in the blue collar suburbs of Everett, Chelsea, Revere and Somerville. Last year, there were enough South Boston students at Newman Prep, a Catholic high school in downtown Boston, to hold their own junior prom.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



## Worksheet for Taking Notes on the Source

1.	<p>TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Newspaper</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Map</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Advertisement</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Letter</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Telegram</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Congressional Record</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Patent</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Press Release</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Census Report</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Memorandum</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Report</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="radio"/> Newspaper	<input type="radio"/> Map	<input type="radio"/> Advertisement	<input type="radio"/> Letter	<input type="radio"/> Telegram	<input type="radio"/> Congressional Record	<input type="radio"/> Patent	<input type="radio"/> Press Release	<input type="radio"/> Census Report	<input type="radio"/> Memorandum	<input type="radio"/> Report	<input type="radio"/> Other
<input type="radio"/> Newspaper	<input type="radio"/> Map	<input type="radio"/> Advertisement											
<input type="radio"/> Letter	<input type="radio"/> Telegram	<input type="radio"/> Congressional Record											
<input type="radio"/> Patent	<input type="radio"/> Press Release	<input type="radio"/> Census Report											
<input type="radio"/> Memorandum	<input type="radio"/> Report	<input type="radio"/> Other											
2.	<p>UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead</td> <td style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Notations</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Typed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Seals</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations	<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp	<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Seals					
<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations												
<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp												
<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other												
<input type="checkbox"/> Seals													
3.	<p>DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:</p>												
4.	<p>AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:</p> <p>POSITION (TITLE):</p>												
5.	<p>FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?</p>												
6.	<p>DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.) <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Limit response for each question to 3 lines of text</span></p> <p>A. List three things the author said that you think are important:</p>   <p>B. Why do you think this document was written?</p>   <p>C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.</p>   <p>D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.</p>   <p>E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:</p>												

Reset Form

**Designed and developed by the  
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration,  
Washington, DC 20408**

Print Form

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

### A. Essential elements of a skillfully written essay – includes:

1. An introduction that:
  - Immediately identifies the source(s) that you will discuss and states what you intend to argue or explain
  - If the source is a primary (or historical) source, describes it and identify its place and time of origin.
  - If you are analyzing a secondary (or scholarly) source, briefly states the author's main point in one to two sentences.
  - Forecasts what you will argue in the essay and how you will structure the discussion.
  
2. Each of the paragraphs require:
  - A topic sentence that introduces the focus of the paragraph and the argument developed within it.
    - The topic sentence serves as a transition from discussion in the preceding paragraph. Assess whether your paragraphs transition smoothly, one to the next.
    - The topic sentence should state a specific claim/point. Avoid empty generalizations like the plague.
  
  - Supporting reasoning that flows from your point. (Why did you make this point? What's your thinking about it?)
  
  - Specific evidence from assigned readings that support your reasoning.
  
  - Citations for this evidence. (Avoid plagiarism.)
    - Rule of thumb: if the information taken from others is unknown by the general public, you must cite it. This is true even for information that you paraphrase.
    - Consult an online guide for proper formatting of in-text (or below-text) footnotes, as well as the works cited page.

### B. Taking the writing process one step at a time:

1. Before writing a paragraph, finish the statements below aloud. Then type!
  - In this paragraph I will argue that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I make this claim because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - My reasoning is based on the following evidence \_\_\_\_\_.

- Jane Author makes a comparable argument, as seen by her statement that -  
 . . . .
2. After you finish the first draft, evaluate the clarity of your argument.
    - Read the topic sentences—just the topic sentences! Can you understand your overall argument by reading these? If not, you may require an additional claim (and its supporting reasoning and evidence).
    - Have you communicated the claims in a logical order? If not, re-sequence the paragraphs.
  3. Assess whether you “plopped” a quote in a paragraph without introducing or contextualizing it. Help the reader understand why the quote is important to your discussion.
    - Identify the speaker, and if necessary, the publication in which the quote appeared.
    - Indicate why this quote is significant for your argument.
    - Report and cite the quote! (See a style handbook for proper formatting of block quotes.)
  4. Use spell check and a proofreader.
    - Ask your proofreader to identify misspellings, awkwardly worded and/or unclear statements, run-on sentences, and unsubstantiated claims.
    - Ask him or her to places in the text where they were force to reread your argument to better understand your meaning.
      - These statements are what I call “show stoppers.”
      - Too many “show stoppers” discourage and/or bore the reader.
      - Revise these statements to increase their clarity.