



Background Essay on Dear Bess Letters

Bess Truman was born Elizabeth Virginia Wallace on February 13, 1885 in Independence, Missouri. She was born to the prestigious Wallace family and grew up in luxury in a Victorian house on Delaware Street. She is best known for being the 33rd First Lady of the United States when her husband, Harry S. Truman, became President in 1945. Bess and Harry's relationship began long before they were married, giving this couple a very rich history.

Harry Truman was born in Lamar, Missouri in 1884 to a farm family. His family moved often, and they came to Independence in 1890. There, Harry met and immediately became smitten with a young Elizabeth Wallace. The two children met in Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church on the Independence Square. Harry was six and Bess was five. While Harry frequently said that he fell in love with Bess as soon as he met her, she was not as taken with Harry. He worked hard to court Bess for the better part of thirty years

Harry and Bess became engaged in 1917. Their marriage was put on hold until Truman returned from Europe during World War I, but after his return to the United States they were married on June 28, 1919. They welcomed their one and only daughter, Margaret Truman, on February 17, 1924. Bess' life changed drastically when her husband became President following the sudden death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on April 12, 1945. Bess was not interested in living a glamorous life in the public eye, but wanted to keep living the quiet lifestyle that she was used to.

One of the distinctive elements of their relationship was the camaraderie between Bess and Harry. Historians have evidence of this close relationship from a series of letters often referred to as the "Dear Bess" Letters. Harry Truman frequently sought his wife's advice and opinions on his political actions. Bess was also Harry's main speech writer. Due to her strong influence in his life, Harry gave Bess the nickname "The Boss" Bess was very headstrong and was determined to handle being First Lady in her own way. She made her own decisions and ignored some of the traditional roles of the position. She preferred to keep away from the public eye and refused to hold press conferences like the previous First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, had done.

In Harry Truman's "Dear Bess" Letters, he conversed with his wife about his political decisions to a great extent. In fact, Bess became such an integral part of Harry's decision-making process that she grew furious when Harry did not consult her before dropping the atomic bomb on Japan. Their daughter Margaret later wrote that Bess "had become a spectator rather than a partner in Harry Truman's presidency. That made her very angry."

Background (Sources 1-2): This letter was written six days prior to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan had bombed the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. The U.S. then entered World War II against Japan. During this time, there was a project known as the Manhattan Project in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the United States was creating an atomic weapon that would eventually end World War II. Truman made the decision to drop the bomb knowing that it would result in surrender from Japan, and would prevent a land invasion killing even more American soldiers.

Source 1

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, July 31, 1945. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

Berlin July 31, 1945

Dear Bess:

It was surely good to talk with you this morning at 7:00 A.M. It is hard to think that it is 11:00 P.M. yesterday where you are. The connection was not so good this morning on account of the storms over the Atlantic.

We have been going great guns the last day or two and while the conference was at a standstill because of Uncle Joe's indisposition, the able Mr. Byrnes, Molotov, and Attlee and Bevin all worked and accomplished a great deal. I rather think Mr. Stalin is stallin' because he is not so happy over the English elections. He doesn't know it but I have an ace in the hole and another one showing--so unless he has threes or two pair (and I know he has not) we are sitting all right.

The whole difficulty is reparations. Of course the Russians are naturally looters and they have been thoroughly looted by the Germans over and over again and you can hardly blame them for their attitude. The thing I have to watch is to keep our skirts clean and make no commitments.

The Poles are the other headache. They have moved into East Prussia and to the Oder in Prussia, and unless we are willing to go to war again they can stay and they will stay with Bolshivki [sic] backing--so you see in comes old man reparations again and a completely German-looted Poland.

Byrnes, Leahy and I have worked out a program I think to fit a bad situation. We should reach a tentative agreement in the Big Three this afternoon and final one tomorrow and be on the way Thursday and surely not later than Friday.

We are leaving from Plymouth England which gives us 48 hours start of leaving from Antwerp. So if we get untied from the dock Friday afternoon by Thursday we'll be in Norfolk and Washington the next day in the morning. It may be possible of course to be a day sooner but I am giving you the extreme limit. The last pouch leaves here today and one will leave the boat when we get on it. But we'll receive mail right up to leaving time.

I'll sure be glad to see you and the White House and be where I can at least go to bed without being watched.

Kiss my baby, lots and lots of love, Harry

I've got to lunch with the Limey King when I get to Plymouth.

Using Source 1

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote this, and to whom did they write?2. I do/do not trust this document because... | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When and where was the document created?2. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?3. This document might not give me the whole picture because... | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What does the other document say?2. Which of these two documents is most reliable and why? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?2. I think the author chose these words in order to...3. What specific information does Harry relay to Bess regarding the dropping of the atomic bomb? | |

Source 2

Henry Stimson to Harry S. Truman, with attached draft press release, July 31, 1945. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File. Atomic Bomb-Hiroshima.

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

July 31, 1945.

Dear Mr. President:

Attached are two copies of the ^{revised} statement which has been prepared for release by you as soon as the new weapon is used. This is the statement about which I cabled you last night.

The reason for the haste is that I was informed only yesterday that, weather permitting, it is likely that the weapon will be used as early as August 1st, Pacific Ocean Time, which as you know is a good many hours ahead of Washington time.

This message and inclosure are being brought to you by Lt. R. G. Arneson, whom Secretary Byrnes will recognize as the Secretary of the Interim Committee, appointed with your approval, to study various features of the development and use of the atomic bomb.

Faithfully yours,
Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War.

The Honorable
The President.

DECLASSIFIED
... 501 and 502 or 03

Using Source 2

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote this?2. When was it written?3. Why was it written?4. I think the audience is... | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?2. Based on the background information, I understand this document differently because... | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What information is present in this source that is not present in source 1?2. Do the documents agree? If not, why? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?2. What words or phrases grab your attention? Why? | |

Background (Source 3-5): This letter was written three days prior to the Berlin airlift which began on July 26, 1948. After World War II, Germany was divided into four sections. They were divided into a Soviet-bloc, a British-bloc, a French-bloc, and a U.S.-bloc. The capital city of Berlin was divided into four sections as well. The U.S., Britain, and France controlled the western part of Berlin and the Soviets controlled the eastern part. The Soviets wanted the city of Berlin for themselves and closed all highways, roads, and canals leading to the western portion of the city. In 1948, President Truman decided to have the U.S. and other allies give their sections of Berlin supplies by air.

Source 3

Excerpt of letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, July 23, 1948. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

[The White House] July 23, 1948

Dear Bess:

I have been trying to get a letter off every day--hoping every day I'd get one--both the try and the hope in vain. Have had a hectic week. My muttonhead Secretary of the Army ordered Clay home from Germany and stirred up a terrific howdy-do for no good reason. Marshall and I had decided it was not necessary for him to come and so told Forrestal--but you know how smart that Defense setup thinks it is.

To cap it all off, Forrestal comes in with all his help and reads me a letter suggesting I order all atomic bombs turned over to the army. Now wouldn't that be a nice peace gesture?

Marshall and I have had to do a lot of the proper sort of talking to offset these two blunders, but I think we are on top of the situation.

It looks as if the Russkies are going to come in without a fight. If they do and we get the Israelites settled down, things will be in such shape in foreign affairs that we can go to work in earnest on that bunch of "Hypercits" known as Republicans.

Using Source 3

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote this?2. When was it written?3. What is the author's perspective?4. The author probably believes... | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?2. This document might not give me the whole picture because... | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What information does Harry omit in this letter, that he later refers to in source 4?2. Do the documents agree? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the tone of this letter?2. What do Harry's choice of words tell us about his thoughts, feelings, emotions? | |

Source 4

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, August 6, 1948. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

[U.S.S. Williamsburg, AGC-369] August 6, 1948

Dear Bess:

I'm on the boat down about Dalgren [sic], Va. - just below the long bridge. It is the Navy's proving ground - same as Aberdeen, Md. for the Army.

My press conference Thursday seems to have hit the Reps and the opposition press a body blow. Roy Howard is screaming his head off and Taft is madder than a wet hen. Toby's committee reported out Taft's housing bill, which he's against now. They are having a debate this afternoon. The time is controlled by two Republicans! Toby & McCarthy. If I can keep 'em fighting one another we'll go to the races.

Had a fine time at the dinner last night five ex chairmen, Barkley and McGrath. All seemed to have a nice time and we made some progress I think. Mr. White of Ohio, who was Cox's chairman, Frank Walker, Ed Flynn, Hannegan & Homer Cummings were present. They all went away highly pleased.

Had a good Cabinet meeting, short and to the point. Marshall reported on Berlin situation. Looks good. Had a session with Forestal [sic] on a Reserve & National Guard report which he wants to release. The committee was all assistant secretaries Army, Navy, Airforce and one Regular Lt. General & one Rear Admiral - not a Guard or Reserve man on it. I ordered the report held. It is a piece of political dynamite and no good either.

Looks like old Crump got the licking of his lifetime and that good for nothing Tom Stewart was beaten. I sent Kefauver [sic] a telegram.

Hope everybody's well. Will call Sunday.

Lots of love Harry

Using Source 4

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where did Truman write this letter and how could that have impacted the content? | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This document might not give me the whole picture because... | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What can the audience infer by reading the last paragraph of source 3 in the context of source 4? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does Truman's use of figurative language affect the tone of the letter?2. What is the tone of this letter? | |

Source 5

Memorandum, Department of State Summary of Telegrams, June 29, 1948. Truman Papers - Naval Aide Files.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

June 29, 1948

~~SECRET~~
SUMMARY OF TELEGRAMS

GERMANY We are authorizing General Clay in concert with the British and if possible the French commanders in Germany to meet again with local Soviet officials on the question of currency reform to ascertain whether in any sense this is the real point at issue and what the Soviet intentions with respect to Berlin may be. Meanwhile we have reached a preliminary decision to remain in Berlin, supplying the city by air and exploiting the propaganda advantages of our position, while continuing discussions with the British and French concerning the presentation of a note to Moscow.

Ambassador Douglas reports that the British Cabinet has given unqualified and unanimous support to the policy of remaining in Berlin. Foreign Minister Bevin further believes that we should make the greatest possible effort to mobilize our air strength as a demonstration to all of Europe of our power and technical ability and that we should certainly send a note to Moscow following the meeting of General Clay with the Soviet Commander and after we have mobilized most of our air transport strength.

The French representative in London has expressed the view that the recent Warsaw Communique may well evidence a Soviet desire to reopen four-power talks on Germany. The French therefore believe that the three western powers should promptly consult on this. Bevin has expressed his complete agreement that three-power consultations be held in London as soon as possible.

From Paris Ambassador Caffery reports that the moderate line being taken by the most authoritative writers in the Communist press suggests that the Kremlin does not yet wish to take a completely uncompromising attitude toward the Berlin situation. One source close to Comintern circles has indicated that present Soviet moves are more of the "war of nerves" designed to secure for Moscow a voice in the affairs of western Germany and that they are not necessarily aimed at driving the western powers out of Berlin.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-402

State Dept. Guideline, June 12, 1979

By NLT- *HC* NARS, Date *11-13-80*

Using Source 5

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why was this source written? | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When and where was the document created? | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Which of the three documents is the most reliable in learning about Truman's position on Berlin? Why?2. After reading source 5, what information does Truman withhold from Bess in his letters? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the tone of this document?2. The author is trying to convince the audience... | |

Background (Source 6-7): This letter was written approximately two weeks before North Korea invaded South Korea beginning U.S. involvement in what we know today as the Korean War. The U.S. participated in what is known as *containment*, or preventing the spread of Communism to non-Communist countries. The island country of Korea was divided into a northern, communist section, a southern section. On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea with the support of the Soviet Union and China. The United Nations, in which the U.S. was a part of became involved to help South Korea avoid becoming a Communist nation.

Source 6

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman [Gift of Elliott Galleries, Flora K. Bloom, President.], July 12, 1950. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

Dear Bess:

The day was much brighter when your good note came with the enclosure. It certainly must be cold if you had to light the furnace. What happened about a new one?

Mary gets here today for her Star meeting. I suppose she'll stay over Sunday. Wish Margie were coming home over the week end. I am going down the River on Saturday unless the country is really gone to hell by that time. I've been working almost night and day since June 29th. Have conferences nearly every day and evening. In addition to that I've been sitting in the dentists chair for an hour every afternoon since Monday. Have at last found a good dentist. He's remaking my lastest [sic] upper bridge that Dr. Forsyth just put in and which came out twice of its own accord. This new man is named Major Moulton and I think he knows what he's about. He is going to fix my old lower bridge and make me a new crown on the left side too.

It looks bad in the Far East. We can't get there in force for 3 weeks and by then it may be too late. Or there'll be an explosion someplace else. Hope we can contain it and not have to order our terrible weapon turned loose.

What with all that I thought a short change of scenery might keep me from being jittery. I lost my temper yesterday and gave old Sen. Wiley a tongue lasting at a conference I was having with eight Senators. He had it coming but it probably would have been better not to do it.

Hope your mother continues to improve.

Lots of love Harry

Using Source 6

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| Sourcing Questions 1. Why was this letter written? | |
| Contextualization Questions 1. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? | |
| Corroboration Tasks 1. After reading source 7, what is going on in Truman's presidency that is not mentioned in source 6? | |
| Close Reading Questions 1. How does the tone of this letter change throughout? What does this tell us about Truman's ideas/thoughts about the situation in Korea? | |

Source 7

Army Department Message, July 10, 1950. Naval Aide Files, Truman Papers.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF MESSAGE CENTER
OUTGOING CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

~~SECRET~~
OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

PARAPHRASE NOT REQUIRED

Joint Chiefs of Staff
M M Stephens Capt US Navy
Executive Secretary JCS
55234

TO: CINCPAC TOKYO JAPAN

INFO: CINCAL FT RICHARDSON ALASKA, CINCARIB QUARRY HEIGHTS
CZ, CINCEUR HEIDELBERG GERMANY, COMGENUSPA (REAR)
SALZBURG AUSTRIA, CINCPAC PEARL HARBOR TH, CINCIANT
NOFOLK VA, CINCELM LONDON ENGLAND, COMGENRAC OFFUTT
AFB OMAHA NEBR, COMCENTRUST TRIESTE.

NR: JCS 85370

10 JUL 50

From JCS.

You have been designated by the President of the United States as commander of military forces assisting the Republic of Korea which are placed under the unified command of the United States by members of the United Nations in response to the resolution of 7 July of the Security Council of the United Nations. You are authorized to use at your discretion the United Nations flag concurrently with the flags of other nations participating in operations against North Korean forces. The United Nations flag will be used only in operations against North Korean forces and will therefore not be used in connection with your mission with respect to Formosa.

The terms of this directive authorizing the use of the United Nations flag at your discretion have been approved by the President of the United States and supersede the implications in his press release, Washington, 8 July, (Info note: Text of Security Council resolution of 7 July will be transmitted to you).

ORIGIN: JCS

DISTR : NAVVAIDE, CSAF, CNO, CSA

CM OUT 85370

(Jul 50)

DTG: 101714Z rkh

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-402

DDO Directive 5100.30, June 13, 1979

By NLT-*HC* NARS, Date *11-5-80*

COPY No. *M-2*

THE MAKING OF AN EXACT COPY OF THIS MESSAGE IS FORBIDDEN

14-58720-1

Using Source 7

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From whom is this document coming?2. What type of document is this?3. To whom is this document written? | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. After looking at the heading of the source, how does it explain the brief content of source 6? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What message is the Department of the Army relaying on behalf of Truman?2. What does this document tell us about Korea and the United States at the time? | |

Background Information (Source 8-9): In the years following World War II, most of Europe was in shambles both financially and infrastructurally. The Truman Administration believed that in order to keep Europe politically strong and able to resist Communism, economies needed to be rebuilt in Europe. In an effort to help rebuild the economies of these European nations, the Secretary of State, George Marshall, proposed an economic assistance and recovery plan in which the United States would ship food, staples, fuel, and machinery to Europe. The Marshall Plan was officially announced to the world on June 5, 1947. When all was said and done, Europe received close to \$13 billion in aid.

Source 8

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, September 30, 1947. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

The White House] September 30, 1947

Dear Bess:

Yesterday was one of the most hectic of days, as I told you. I'm not sure what has been my worst day. But here is a situation fraught with terrible consequences. Suppose, for instance, that Italy should fold up and that Tito then would march into the Po Valley. All the Mediterranean coast of France then is open to Russian occupation and the iron curtain comes to Bordeaux, Calais, Antwerp, and The Hague. We withdraw from Greece and Turkey and prepare for war. It just must not happen. But here I am confronted with a violently opposition Congress whose committees with few exceptions are living in 1890; it is not representative of the country's thinking at all. But I've a job and it must be done--win, lose, or draw.

Sent letters to Taber, Bridges, Vandenberg, and Eaton requesting them to call their committees together as soon as possible. Had my food committee together and will make a radio speech Sunday. To feed France and Italy this winter will cost 580 million, the Marshall Plan 16.5 billion. But you know in October and November 1945 I canceled 63 billion in appropriations--55 billion at one crack. Our war cost that year was set at 105 billion. The 16.5 is for a four-year period and is for peace. A Russian war would cost us 400 billion and untold lives, mostly civilian. So I must do what I can. I shouldn't write you this stuff but you should know what I've been facing since Potsdam.

Bill Helm's book is a great disappointment. It is a buildup of Bill and not a biography of me. Too bad. The Potomac has a bad effect on all of 'em.

Hope you have a nice time, a good party at the Muehlebach. I'm sure you will. I haven't resumed my walks yet but will in a day or two. Too much to read. General Bradley made a report to me today on his European trip and he remarked on my having had to make more momentous decisions than nearly any other President. He's right, and I hope most of 'em have been right.

Edward Arnold came in to see me this afternoon and brought me wonderful pictures of all the Presidents. He told me and the office force some good stories about Sam Goldwyn, Harry Warner and Syros Skourus, imitating them in their manners and voice. It gave me sore sides from laughing.

Tell the baby I'll write her soon. Hope Frank doesn't get another boil.

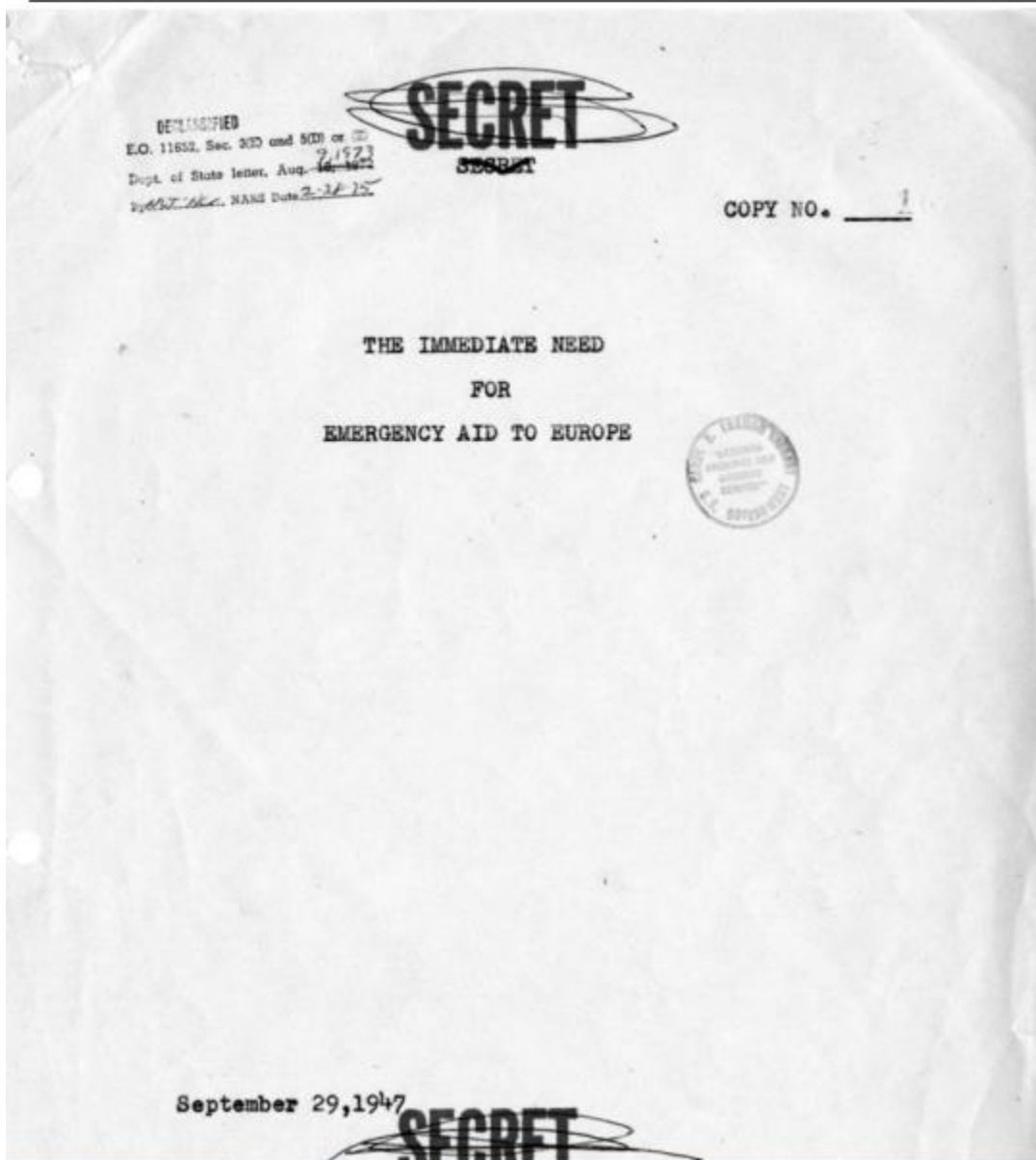
Lots of love Harry.

Using Source 8

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| Sourcing Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why was this letter written?2. The author probably believes... | |
| Contextualization Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? | |
| Corroboration Tasks <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sources 8 and 9 agree/disagree about...2. After reading source 9, why does Truman indicate in this letter that he should not be writing about "this stuff"? | |
| Close Reading Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the author's use of data indicate his perspective?2. How does the tone of the letter change from beginning to end? | |

Source 9

"The Immediate Need for Emergency Aid to Europe," September 29, 1947. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's Files. European Emergency.



~~SECRET~~

IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EMERGENCY AID TO EUROPE

A.

THE PROBLEM

1. The emergency needs of certain key countries of western Europe cannot be met without immediate action on the part of the United States. These countries, particularly Italy and France, are without adequate food and fuel supplies for the fall and winter and without sufficient dollars with which to buy them. They cannot, by their own efforts, survive the major crisis which is already upon them. A collapse of France and Italy could initiate expanding economic depression and political repercussions throughout Europe and, potentially, over a wide part of the world.

2. The following sections of this memorandum deal in more detail with the financial, food, and foreign political aspects of the situation.



Using Source 9

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who created this document?2. What was the author's purpose in creating this document? | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Based on the background information, I understand this document differently because...2. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does this memo from the State Department agree with Harry's letter to Bess? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the author's claim?2. The evidence used in Harry's letter to support this claim is... | |

Background Information (Source 10-11): In the days prior to the dropping of the atomic bomb, Truman met with the leaders of the other Allied forces in Potsdam, Germany. At this conference, Truman, Churchill, and Stalin discussed the fate of post-war Germany. Additionally, the “Big Three”, as they were known, issued a declaration demanding unconditional surrender from Japan. While in Potsdam, Harry Truman wrote home to Bess numerous times.

Source 10

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, July 20, 1945. Truman Papers- Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

Berlin July 20, 1945

Dear Bess:

It was an experience to talk to you from my desk here in Berlin night before last. It sure made me homesick. This is a hell of a place--ruined, dirty, smelly, forlorn people, bedraggled, hangdog look about them. You never saw as completely ruined a city. But they did it. I am most comfortably fixed and the palace where we meet is one of two intact palaces left standing.

Jim Blair came to see me yesterday and had breakfast with me this morning. He is a Lt. Col. and is in charge of food and clean up for American forces here. Said it was the filthiest place he ever saw when he arrived--but it's clean now.

We had a tough meeting yesterday. I reared up on my hind legs and told 'em where to get off and they got off. I have to make it perfectly plain to them at least once a day that so far as this President is concerned Santa Claus is dead and that my first interest is U.S.A., then I want the Jap War won and I want 'em both in it. Then I want peace--world peace and will do what can be done by us to get it. But certainly am not going to set up another foil here in Europe, pay reparations, feed the world, and get nothing for it but a nose thumbing. They are beginning to awake to the fact that I mean business.

It was my turn to feed 'em at a formal dinner last night. Had Churchill on my right, Stalin on my left. We toasted the British King, the Soviet President, the U.S. President, the two honor guests, the foreign ministers, one at a time, etc. etc. ad lib. Stalin felt so friendly that he toasted the pianist when he played a Tskowsky (you spell it) piece especially for him. The old man loves music. He told me he'd import the greatest Russian pianist for me tomorrow. Our boy was good. His name is List and he played Chopin, Von Weber, Schubert, and all of them.

The ambassadors and Jim Byrnes said the party was a success. Anyway they left in a happy frame of mind. I gave each of them a fine clock, specially made for them, and a set of that good, navy luggage. Well I'm hoping to get done in a week. I'm sick of the whole business--but we'll bring home the bacon.

Kiss Margie, lots and lots of love, Harry.

Using Source 10

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| <p>Sourcing Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote this?2. What is the author's perspective? | |
| <p>Contextualization Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When and where was the document created?2. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? | |
| <p>Corroboration Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why do you think there are not any letters from Truman to his advisors while he was in Berlin? | |
| <p>Close Reading Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?2. What is the overall tone of this letter? | |

Source 11

Letter from Harry S. Truman to Bess W. Truman, July 25, 1945. Truman Papers - Family, Business, and Personal Affairs Papers.

Berlin July 25, 1945

Dear Bess:

We have been going at it hammer and tongs in the last few days and it looks as if we may finish up Sunday. I hope so at any rate. I told them yesterday that I intend to head for Washington at the earliest possible moment and that when we came to an impasse I would leave.

We have accomplished a very great deal in spite of all the talk. Set up a council of ministers to negotiate peace with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, and Austria. We have discussed a free waterway program for Europe, making the Black Sea straits, the Danube, the Rhine, and the Kiel Canal free to everyone. We have a setup for the government of Germany and we hope we are in sight of agreement on reparations.

So you see we have not wasted time. There are some things we can't agree to. Russia and Poland have gobbled up a big hunk of Germany and want Britain and us to agree. I have flatly refused. We have unalterably opposed the recognition of police governments in the Germany Axis countries. I told Stalin that until we had free access to those countries and our nationals had their property rights restored, so far as we were concerned there'd never be recognition. He seems to like it when I hit him with a hammer.

I see Drew Pearson has been taking an interest in Vietta. If that so-and-so ever says anything to your or Margaret's detriment I shall give him a little Western direct action that he'll long remember. I don't care what he says about me but I can get hotter than a depot stove when he mentions my family.

Kiss Margie, lots of love, Harry.

Using Source 11

| | |
|---|--|
| Sourcing Questions 1. What is the author's perspective? | |
| Contextualization Questions 1. When and where was this letter written? | |
| Corroboration Tasks 1. Sources 10 and 11 agree/disagree about... | |
| Close Reading Questions 1. What details does the author include that show the audience how he views Bess as a political confidante? | |

What is Truman's tone when he writes to Bess about major world events compared to the tone used in classified and unclassified documents?

| Event | Truman's Perspective to Bess | Political Perspectives |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Dropping of Atomic Bomb</i> | | |
| <i>Berlin Airlift</i> | | |
| <i>Korea</i> | | |
| <i>Marshall Plan</i> | | |
| <i>Potsdam Conference</i> | | |