

Teaching notes

This source based investigation is an opportunity to explicitly teach source analysis skills. You could use NOP (nature, origin, purpose) or PACT (purpose, author, content, tone) as a way of approaching and discussing the sources.

Starter suggestion:

Students in pairs look at Source 1 and consider the question underneath. There are two versions of this (the question differs!) so give half the class each version. This should generate two very different views of the reliability of the source. The key points, that reliability depends on the *question* you ask, and that even unreliable sources can tell us useful things, should be brought out in class discussion. Move on to discuss whether we can find out from this source how Mrs Cogger's daughter behaved at school.

Development:

A certain level of prior knowledge is expected and the sequencing activity is intended as a recap. The correct order is given here. This activity is also available in an interactive version (for subscribers only) on the site.

	Henry and Becket became best friends.
1155	Henry made Becket Chancellor of England.
1162	Henry made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury.
1164	Becket quarrelled with Henry over the issue of Church Courts.
1165	Becket ran away to France for five years.
1170	Becket and Henry patched up their quarrel and Becket returned to England.
1170	Becket excommunicated three bishops.
1170	Henry was heard to say, 'Is there no one who will rid me of this turbulent priest?'
1170	Becket is murdered in Canterbury Cathedral

A good way to then introduce the detailed source analysis is to show a clip of a re-enactment of the murder: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/the-death-of-becket/868.html>.

There are then three sources to evaluate in order to discover what happened at Becket's murder. The **picture source** (source C) is provided as a separate PDF file.

Why is it difficult to find out about Becket's death?

Source 1:

'My darling daughter is an absolute angel! When she was at school she was the brightest student of them all. Sometimes the teachers picked on my daughter and blamed her for things she would never ever do, like bunking lessons, forgetting homework, running around during lessons or pretending to be ill to get out of PE. Those brutal teachers simply didn't understand my golden daughter! I'm sure it was the other children who got her into all sorts of trouble.'

- Mrs Cogger, adoring mother, 65

- 1) How reliable is this source for finding out what Mrs Cogger thinks of her daughter?

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- Mrs Cogger, adoring mother, 65

- 1) How reliable is this source for finding out how Mrs Cogger's daughter behaved at school?

Put these events in order:

Henry and Becket became best friends.

Henry made Becket Chancellor of England.

Henry made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury.

Becket quarrelled with Henry over the issue of Church Courts.

Becket ran away to France for five years.

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Becket is murdered in Canterbury Cathedral.

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Becket is murdered in Canterbury Cathedral.

Why is it difficult to find out about Becket's death?

Source A: written by Edward Grim, a priest who was with Becket when he died.

The murderers came in full armour, with swords and axes. The monks cried out to the archbishop to flee to the Church. But he had long since yearned for martyrdom and dreaded that it would be delayed if he fled to the church. But the monks dragged and pushed him into the church. The four knights followed with rapid strides. The Archbishop ordered the doors of the church to be kept open.

The knights called out angrily, 'Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the King and the country?' At this, he quite unafraid came down the steps and answered, 'Here I am no traitor to the King, but a priest'. 'You shall die this instant!' they cried. Becket inclined his head as one in prayer and joined his hands together and uplifted them.

The wicked knight leapt suddenly upon him and wounded him in the head. Next he received a second blow on the head, but still he stood firm. At the third blow he fell on his knees and elbows, saying in a low voice, 'for the name of Jesus I am ready to die'.

The next blow separated the crown of his head and the blood white with the brain and the brain red with the blood stained the floor. The fourth knight warded off any who sought to interfere. A fifth man placed his foot on the neck of the holy priest and scattered his brains and blood about the floor.

- 1) Highlight any words/phrases that show Becket was **brave**. In another colour highlight any words/phrases that show Becket was a **religious** man.
- 2) Who wrote the account? How do you think this might have influenced the way he described Becket's murder?

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- 3) How reliable is Edward Grim's account of Thomas Becket's murder?
Refer to who wrote the account, and include a short quotation from the source to support your answer.

I think this source is/is not reliable because

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Why is it difficult to find out about Becket's death?

Source B: written by William Fitzstephen, Becket's friend.

One of the knights struck the Archbishop between the shoulders with the flat of his sword saying 'Fly! You are a dead man!'. But the archbishop stood unmoved, and offering his neck for a blow commended himself to God, while his lips repeated the names of the holy archbishops who had been martyrs before him. The knights tried to drag him out of the church. But the monks held him back.

Edward Grim, one of the monks, putting his arm out, received the first blow of the sword. At the same time, Becket was wounded in the head. As he knelt down clasping his hands out to God, a second stroke was dealt him on the head, at which he fell by the altar. While he lay there, Richard Brito struck him with such force that the sword was broken against his head. Four wounds in all did the saintly archbishop receive.

The whole of the crown of his head was lopped off. But he didn't try to avoid the blows. He accepted death from a desire to be with God. Hugh of Horsea extracted the blood and brains from the hollow of his head with the point of his sword.

- 4) What are the main differences between source A and source B's account of Becket's death?

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- 5) Look at **Source C**. This was painted 100 years after Becket had died. Which account (source A or B) do you think was used as the basis for this picture? Support your opinion with evidence.

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- 6) Why is it difficult to find out what happened at Becket's murder?

It is difficult to find out what happened at Becket's murder because

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