**The Epic of Gilgamesh**

*Background:* The ***Epic of Gilgamesh*** is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia that is often regarded as the earliest surviving great work of literature. The epic’s prelude offers a general introduction to Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, who was two-thirds god and one-third man. He built magnificent ziggurats, or temple towers, surrounded his city with high walls, and laid out its orchards and fields. He was physically beautiful, immensely strong, and very wise. Although Gilgamesh was godlike in body and mind, he began his kingship as a cruel despot. He accomplished his building projects with forced labor, and his exhausted subjects groaned under his oppression. The gods heard his subjects’ pleas and decided to keep Gilgamesh in check by creating a wild man named Enkidu, who was as magnificent as Gilgamesh. Enkidu became Gilgamesh’s great friend, and Gilgamesh’s heart was shattered when Enkidu died of an illness inflicted by the gods. Gilgamesh then traveled to the edge of the world and learned about the days before the deluge and other secrets of the gods, and he recorded them on stone tablets.

So the goddess conceived an image in her

mind, and it was of the stuff of Anu of the

firmament. She dipped her hands in water and

pinched off clay, she let it fall in the wilderness, and

noble Enkidu was created. There was virtue in him

of the god of war, of Ninurta himself. His body was

rough, he had long hair like a woman's; it waved

like the hair of Nisaba, the goddess of corn. His

body was covered with matted hair like Samugan's,

the god of cattle. He was innocent of mankind; he

knew nothing of the cultivated land.

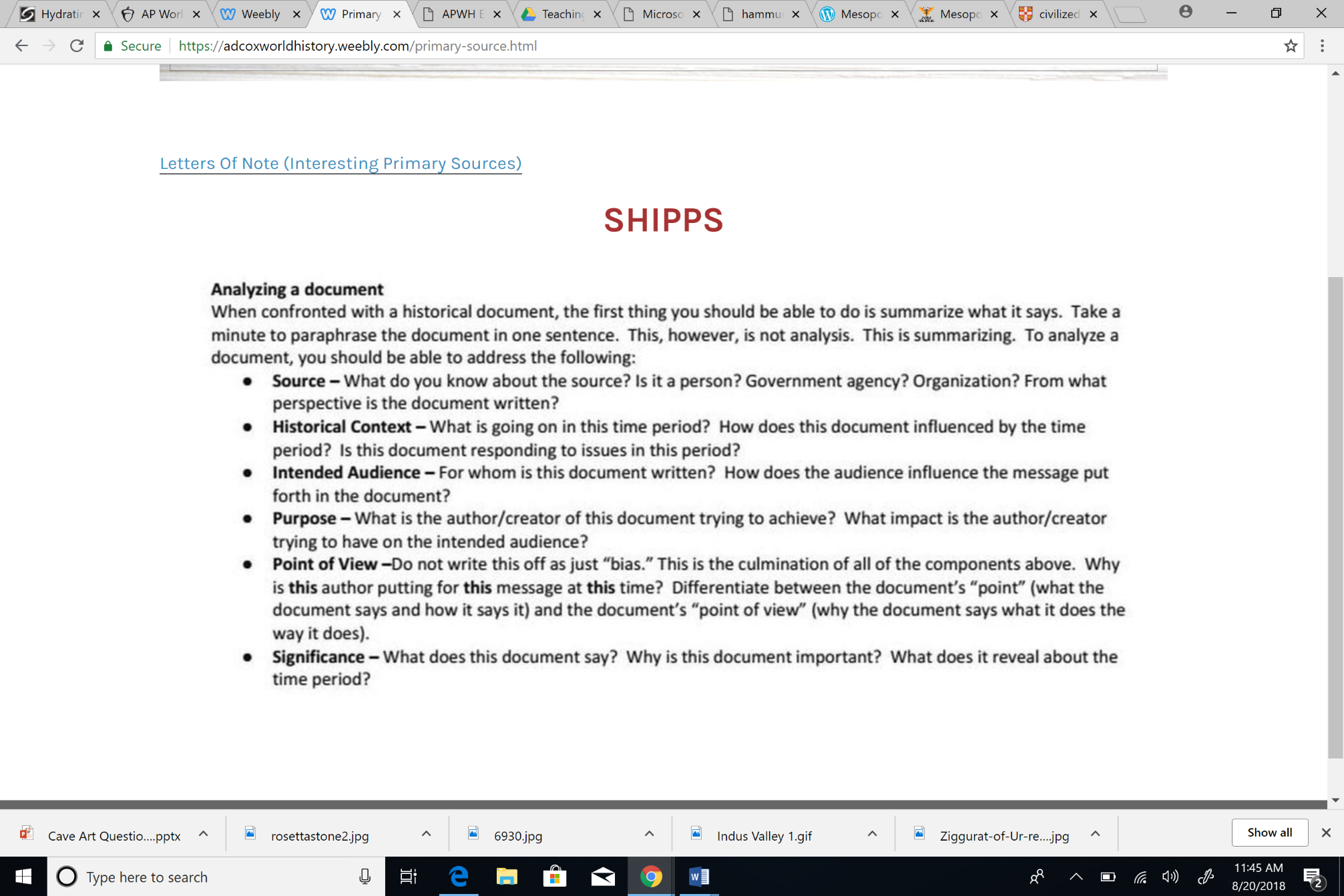
Enkidu ate grass in the hills with the gazelle

and lurked with wild beasts at the water-holes; he

had joy of the water with the herds of wild game.

So the trapper set out on his journey to Uruk and addressed himself to Gilgamesh saying, ‘A man unlike any other is roaming now in the pastures; he is as strong as a star from heaven and I am afraid to approach him. He helps the wild game to escape; he fills in my pits and pulls up my traps.’

[Enkidu] fumbled and gaped, at a loss what to do or how he should eat the bread and drink the strong wine. Then the woman said, 'Enkidu, eat bread, it is the staff of life; drink the wine, it is the custom of the land.' So he ate till he was full and drank strong wine, seven goblets. He became merry, his heart exulted and his face shone. He rubbed down the matted hair of his body and anointed himself with oil. Enkidu had become a man…



**The Epic of Gilgamesh SHIPPS**

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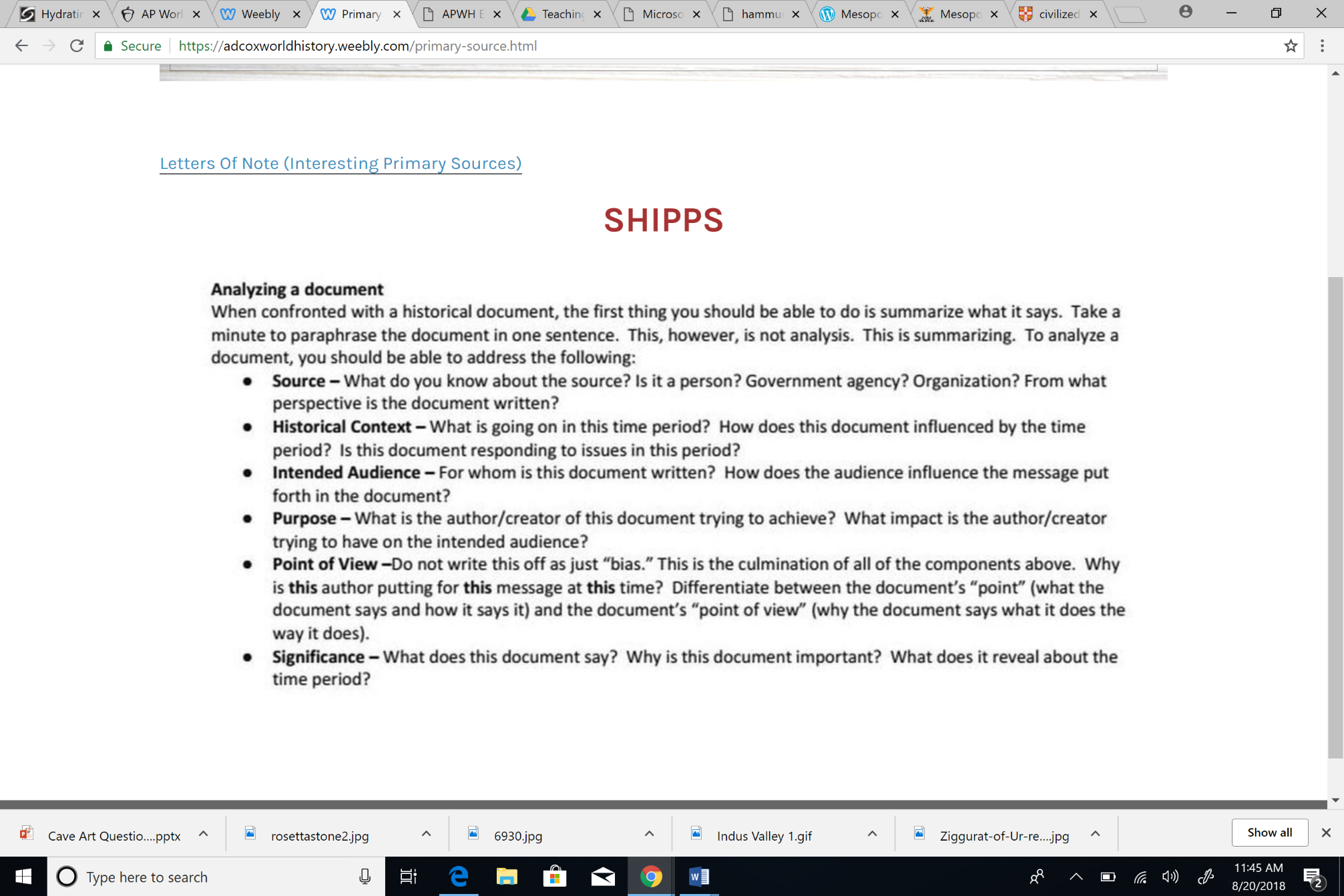
**H**istorical Context-

**I**ntended Audience-

**P**urpose-

**P**oint of View-

**S**ignificance-



**Hammurabi’s Code**

**S**ource-

**H**istorical Context-

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