

PRIMARY SOURCE VS. SECONDARY SOURCE



Primary Source

A source created during the time of the topic under study or by someone who can provide a first-hand account of the topic under study from their personal experience.

- Diary
- Photograph
- Letter
- Postcard
- Ephemera
- Advertisement
- Autobiography
- Map
- Oral History
- Organizational Records (e.g. meeting minutes, strategic plans, publications)
- Government Publications (e.g. census records, statistical reports, bills and laws)
- Artifacts (e.g. clothing, furniture)
- Building

Secondary Source

A source created by someone who did not experience the topic under study first-hand. Secondary sources often analyze, interpret and critique primary sources.

- Encyclopedia
- Biography
- Textbook
- Scholarly Journal or Publication
- Research Report
- Teacher, Professor, Historian or Other Expert



Primary & Secondary Source: Say What?!

Some sources fall into both categories depending upon the content provided. For example, a newspaper article speaking about today's weather is a primary source, while an article commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War I is a secondary source.

- Newspaper
- Magazine
- Non-Fiction Book
- Speech
- Film
- Artwork