

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Primary Source	Secondary Source
<p><u>Primary</u> sources are original, un-interpreted information.</p> <p>Unedited, firsthand access to words, images, or objects created by persons <i>directly involved</i> in an activity or event or <i>speaking directly</i> for a group. This is information <i>before</i> it has been analyzed, interpreted, commented upon, spun, or repackaged. Depending upon the context, these may include paintings, interviews, works of fiction, research reports, sales receipts, speeches, treaties, legislation, letters, e-mails, and others.</p> <p>A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time under study. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event. Some types of primary sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (excerpts or translations acceptable): Diaries, speeches, manuscripts, letters, interviews, news film footage, autobiographies, official records • CREATIVE WORKS: Poetry, drama, novels, music, art • RELICS OR ARTIFACTS: Pottery, furniture, clothing, buildings <p><u>Examples of primary sources include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diary of Anne Frank - Experiences of a Jewish family during WWII • The Constitution of Canada - Canadian History • A journal article reporting NEW research or findings • Weavings and pottery - Native American history • Plato's Republic - Women in Ancient Greece 	<p><u>Secondary</u> sources interpret, analyze or summarize.</p> <p>Commentary upon, or analysis of, events, ideas, or primary sources. Because they are often written significantly after events by parties not directly involved but who have special expertise, they may provide historical context or critical perspectives.</p> <p>A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them. Some types of secondary sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUBLICATIONS: Textbooks, magazine articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, encyclopedias <p><u>Examples of secondary sources include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A journal/magazine article which interprets or reviews previous findings • A history textbook • A book about the effects of WWI