

## Primary and Secondary Sources

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES2

### Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources are documents that examine occurrences, people, etc., and were published during or after the specified time by people who lived the events. Secondary sources are documents that analyzed occurrences, people, etc. but were published after the specified time by people who did not experience the events firsthand (mnhs.org, 2021). Primary sources are created by examination, experimentation, or investigation; secondary sources are created by analyzing or discussing a primary source (Mahmoud, 2021). To know whether a source is primary or secondary, consider how the author is connected to the event and the time of publishing (mnhs.org, 2015).

#### Part 1

##### **The story your grandfather tells you about his experience during the Korean War.**

This is a primary source since the grandfather was a person who witnessed the war, either as a soldier or a civilian. Even though the war ended long ago, his story remains a primary source.

##### **A letter written by George Washington to his mother about the latest developments in the Revolutionary War.**

Since it was written during the time of the war by Washington himself, it is a primary source.

##### **The Diary of Anne Frank - the published diary of a teenage girl who experiences the Holocaust first hand.**

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES3

Though Anne's diary was published later, it remains a primary source as she took part in the event she wrote about and wrote her diary in real-time. Therefore, copies of her diary are primary sources too, since the original work is written by her.

### **Your World History textbook or an encyclopedia.**

These are examples of secondary sources. The writer(s) of textbooks or encyclopedias are people who did not experience the events they write about; they only report on events that were experienced by different people after they took place.

### **Your high school diploma.**

It is a primary source since it covers all the necessary information about a student's progress and grades, though this information was processed after the student completed their examinations.

### **A photograph of you and your friends at your 8<sup>th</sup> birthday party.**

This is a primary source since this photo was taken during the time of the event by someone who witnessed the event.

### **The information from the museum tour guide who shows you around the exhibit and shares facts with you.**

This is a secondary source of information. The tour guide is simply delivering information about events they were not involved in or witnessed.

### **A mummy from ancient Egypt.**

A mummy is a primary source of information; it can provide new information about Ancient Egypt by examination. It once experienced life during that time firsthand.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES4

**A diary titled “Life in the Mines” from a miner named Lucky Noah who lived in Idaho in the 1870’s.**

Just like all autobiographies, this diary is a primary source of information. Lucky lived through the time and the events he wrote about.

**An original photograph from the 1941 attack at Pearl Harbor that you found in your grandparents’ photo album.**

Since the photo was taken during the time of the attack, the photographer is a participant in this event and it is a primary source.

**An original World War I uniform worn by your great grandfather.**

Objects, such as this uniform, were made during the time of the event. This makes it a primary source of information.

**An encyclopedia entry on the Vietnam War.**

Encyclopedia entries are secondary sources of information because they were most likely written by someone who did not experience the war firsthand, like a historian or a student.

**The diary of Anne Frank (a young girl who lived in hiding during the Holocaust)**

The original diary of Anne Frank is a primary source of information, since she lived through the time of the Holocaust.

**Sheet music that was used to play military tunes during the Revolutionary War.**

This is a primary source. The music sheet was used during the time of the War by people who participated in that event.

**A website that summarizes Ancient Roman mythology.**

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

The website is a secondary source. The information published on that website is most likely derived from a primary source, such as Ancient Roman writings.

### **A map of China created during ancient times.**

This map is a primary source since it was made and used by people who lived during that era.

### **An ancient tablet of Babylonian King Hammurabi's Code of Laws.**

It is a primary source since information about this era can be obtained from this tablet. It was created by people who lived during this time and witnessed it.

### **Pictures taken by your Aunt Sally of the World Trade Center attack.**

These pictures are primary sources, since they were taken during the time of the event by someone who witnessed it.

### **A newspaper article outlining the effect of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

In case the newspaper article was written by someone who experienced living in Iraq and Afghanistan during and/or after the wars, it is a primary source of information.

### **A manuscript of Barak Obama's first speech as President.**

Manuscripts are primary sources. It was written during the time when the speech was given.

**An ancient Egyptian mummy you saw at a museum.** It is a primary source. The mummy once lived during the ancient times, and it can provide information about what life was like back then.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES6

### **You are researching the life of Russian soldiers during WWII.**

- Letters from the soldiers to their families
- Soldiers' autobiographies
- History textbooks

Letters and autobiographies are sources of primary information. They were written by people who participated in the events of the war. History books are secondary sources since they were written by people who did not experience the war firsthand.

### **You are researching the burial practices of Egyptian Pharaohs.**

- Photographs of the process from Ancient Egyptian temples
- Documentaries
- Seeing mummies in a museum

Photographs of the burial practices and mummies are primary sources since they provide information from a direct source. Documentaries are secondary sources. This is because the information they provide is coming from a person who did not witness the burial process firsthand.

### **You are researching about the conflict in Afghanistan.**

- Photographs
- Interviews with survivors and soldiers
- Original film footage

These are all primary sources. Photographers, videographers, soldiers and civilians are all people who lived through the time of the conflict. They experienced its outcomes firsthand.

**You are researching the 1906 Earthquake in San Francisco.**

- Photographs
- Government records
- Newspapers from that time

They are all primary sources. They provide facts and figures about the number of deaths, number of injuries, affected areas, etc. They also cover information about how the people dealt with such crises during that time.

### **Conclusion**

Primary sources are materials created during or after an event by someone who experienced said event firsthand. Secondary sources are materials created after an event by someone, or a group of people, who did not experience this event firsthand. Primary sources are created by investigation, whereas secondary sources are created by interpreting a primary source. A primary source cannot simultaneously be a secondary source, considering who published the work and when they did.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES8

### References

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