

FINDING & USING PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

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Library Website: [Lola Viets Library](#)

What is a primary source? A primary source is a piece of written evidence from the time period you are researching. Primary sources were often unpublished.

What is a secondary source? A secondary source has been written by a researcher using primary documents. It is a published article or book.

Where are primary source documents found? Documents have always been accessed through libraries. Now, the Internet provides access through some reliable sites.

1. Collected Documents - primary sources available through local and state libraries with a library card or a free registration

- [State Library of Kansas databases](#) - free in-state access on school network
- [Gale World History database](#) (password: viking) - WHS library subscription
- [Gale US History database](#) (password: viking) - WHS library subscription
- [Kansas History database](#) (password: viking) - WHS library subscription
- [WorldCat](#) - world library catalog access with a free registration

2. Digitized Documents - primary sources that might be scanned in an original format and made available on the Internet

- [The Reference and User Services Association](#) - lists of digital collections
- [American Memory Project](#) - collections within The Library of Congress
- [Digital Public Library of America](#) - over 7 million digitized items
- [WorldCat](#) - choose "Format; downloadable archival material"
- [Serendip-o-matic](#) - paste a text to see related sources
- [Google Scholar](#) - If you must use Google!

What makes a database reliable?

Documents in a database are **scholarly** (in-depth) and **peer-reviewed** (vetted).

Where else are primary sources found?

Microform, archives, manuscript collections, and records: many are being digitized and made available online or by sending electronically.