Transcript: Resources

Scene 1: Internal Mental Monologue
Character A: I have just received my first university assignment. My lecturer said I must use authoritative sources of information, information that is reliable, credible, and from reputable or established publishers. I'm not too sure what that means though… maybe I should ask a senior?

Transition text: Senior located. Asking in progress…

Scene 2: Conversation with Senior
Character B: Oh, that's a good question! You have to be very careful about where you get facts and information for your assignments. It is very easy to rely on random websites to get quick information, but you can't be sure the info there is reliable.
It is better to use the library search when you can. Resources accessed through the Library's website are usually authoritative and appropriate for academic work.

Student A: But I use information from the internet all the time!

Student B: Using Google and other search engines on the Web for research is risky. Although free internet resources can be authoritative too, especially if they are offered by government agencies or academic institutions, the majority of internet resources tend to be unverified.
Wikipedia, for example, is not authoritative because there is no way to verify authorship and anyone can edit an entry at any time.
I have class now, so maybe you could ask a librarian for more help. They will be able to tell you more about the resources the library has.

Transition text: To the library!

Scene 3: Conversation with Librarian
Librarian: Hello, how can I help you?

Student A: For my assignment, I was asked to refer to authoritative sources of information. Information that is reliable, credible, and from reputable or established publishers.
How can I make sure that I use the right resources?

Librarian: You've come to the right place! Acquiring information from the resources provided by the Library is key to academic success.
As a university student, you will be referencing many books and journal articles.
You will often find scholarly journal articles in subject-specific journals which are published periodically, on a monthly or quarterly or yearly basis.
Books and journal articles from the library collection are mostly academic in nature and provide an in-depth and thorough understanding of a topic. They are generally:

- Written by experts
- Peer-reviewed, which means they are edited by peers for validity and reliability before they are published.

- Contain a full reference list or bibliography of sources, which can lead you to other related articles, so they are a great source of information for your research.

Student A: Does the library have other resources besides books and articles?

Librarian: Yes, the library offers a diverse range of resources. Aside from books and articles, Monash University Library provides access to specialised databases, reports, newspapers, patents, audiovisual materials, and much more. Feel free to search the library catalogue to explore our collections.

Student A: I've heard my lecturer talk about databases before, but don't really know what they are. Could you tell me more about them?

Librarian: Of course. Databases are searchable digital collections of information. While most library databases index articles from journals, magazines, and newspapers, information exists in various forms, so you can often find databases which specialise in other forms of information, such as media. Databases may also be discipline-specific or multidisciplinary. It is often helpful to search for databases specific to your area of study.

Student A: Thank you for explaining to me about the different types of library resources. But my lecturer also mentioned primary and secondary sources. What are they?

Librarian: Primary sources are original materials created at the time of the event or period you're studying. They provide direct insights into historical moments, experiences, and viewpoints.
Here are some examples of primary sources:

- Original research papers
- Interview transcripts
- Eyewitness reports
- Original artworks
- Patents
- Technical standards
- Legislations
- Medical images

Secondary sources reference, interpret, and comment on primary sources.
And here are some examples of secondary resources:

- Review articles
- Textbooks
- Newspaper commentary, editorial and opinion pieces
- Biographies
- Encyclopedias and dictionaries

Often, for a given assignment, you will need to use a combination of information from both types of sources. Keep in mind that both types play important roles in building a well-rounded understanding of any subject.

Student A: Okay, I think I have a better idea of what resources I should focus on for my assignments now. But can I still use materials I source from the internet?

Librarian: Yes, you can. You just have to be a little more careful and make sure to investigate your sources. The key to using free online resources is critical thinking and the ability to verify, corroborate, question, and fact-check before using the information. Websites hosted by the government or reputable organisations are more likely to be reliable sources of information. You can look out for websites with these domain endings:

- .org (a registered organisation)
- .edu (an educational institution)
- .gov (a government agency)

Student A: Great! Thanks for your advice!

Narrator: In summary, the university library should be your first stop for quality scholarly resources for your assignment as the collections have been curated by reputable publishers. Resources on the open web may still be useful, but you will have to put in the extra effort to ensure that the sources of information are reliable and authoritative.
Primary sources and secondary sources are both important sources of information, but you need to be aware that secondary sources are derived from primary resources and may not be free from bias.