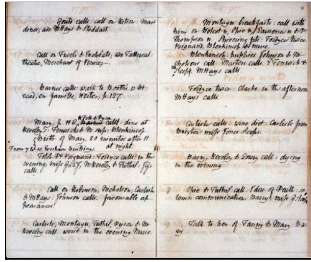


Primary v. Secondary Sources



Primary Source

Direct, first-hand account

Examples of Primary Sources can include:

Texts of laws and other original documents.

Newspaper reports, by reporters who witnessed an event or who quote people who did.

Speeches, diaries, letters and interviews - what the people involved said or wrote.

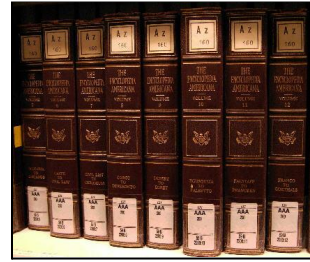
Original research.

Datasets, survey data, such as census or economic statistics.

Photographs, video, or audio that capture an event.

Maps and other works of art.

Material culture artifacts.



Secondary Source

Indirect, second-hand account

Examples of Secondary Sources can include:

Most books about a topic.

Analysis or interpretation of data.

Scholarly or other articles about a topic, especially by people not directly involved.

Documentaries (though they often include photos or video portions that can be considered primary sources).

Whether something is a primary or secondary source often depends upon the topic and its use.

A biology textbook would be considered a secondary source if your topic is in the field of biology, since the textbook describes and interprets the science but makes no original contribution to it. If your topic is science education and the history of textbooks, a biology textbook could be used as a primary source to look at how textbooks have changed over time.

Adapted from Bowling Green State University, Library User Education, Primary vs. Secondary Sources.