

Primary Sources

Primary sources are:

- Documentation for history as it is being made.
- information in its original form at the time the event occurred or well after the events in the form of memoirs and oral histories.
- material that has not been published anywhere else or put into a context, interpreted, filtered, condensed, or evaluated by anyone else.
- an account by an eyewitness or the first recorder of an event, in written or other form
 - diaries
 - letters
 - manuscripts
 - autobiographies
 - journals
 - memoirs
 - interviews
 - minutes of meetings
 - news footage
 - newspaper articles written at the time of the event
 - a professor's lecture
 - Original Documents (i.e. birth certificate or a trial transcript)
 - dissertations or theses (*may also be secondary*)
- data obtained through original research, statistical compilations or legal requirements.
 - reports or writing of scientific study
 - documents produced by government agencies (Congress or the Office of the President)
 - U.S. census records
 - public records.
 - records of organizations
 - patents
- creative works
 - original works
 - poetry
 - music
 - art
- artifacts
 - pottery
 - furniture
 - buildings
 - ancient roads
 - tools and weapons that serve as raw material to interpret the past.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are:

- removed from the original source and repackaged
 - commentary on and discussion of evidence
 - works that interpret or evaluate the primary data
- Examples:*
- monographs (a book about eating disorders)
 - notes on a professor's lecture
 - a newspaper article reporting on a scientific study published elsewhere
 - biographical works
 - textbooks
 - works of criticism and interpretation

Tertiary Sources

Tertiary sources are:

- a selection, distillation, summary or compilation of primary sources, secondary sources, or both
- works which index, organize and compile citations to, and show you how to use, secondary (and sometimes primary) sources.
- materials in which the information from secondary sources has been "digested" - reformatted and condensed, to put it into a convenient, easy-to-read form.
- Sources which are once removed in time from secondary sources

Examples:

- Almanacs;
- Bibliographies (may be secondary);
- Chronologies;
- Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (may also be secondary);
- Directories;
- Fact books;
- Guidebooks;
- Indexes, abstracts, bibliographies used to locate primary and secondary sources;
- Manuals;
- Textbooks (may also be secondary).