

## Examples of primary sources

- **Archives records** (minutes of meetings, purchase invoices, financial statements, etc.) of an organization (for example the World Wildlife Fund), institution (for example the University of St. Thomas), business, or other group entity (even the Grateful Dead has an archivist on staff.)
- **Artifacts** - manufactured items such as clothing, furniture, tools, buildings.
- **Autobiographies and memoirs**
- **Books** - extensive and detailed discussions of a particular topic or set of topics, written by the scholars and researchers who came up with the ideas or discovered the findings.
- **Conference proceedings** - Scholars and researchers getting together and presenting their latest ideas and findings.
- **Government data and documents** - census statistics, economic data, court reports, etc.
- **Historical documents** - official papers, maps, treaties, etc.
- **Internet/electronic communications** on email, listservs, and newsgroups.
- **Interviews and speeches**
- **Journal articles** - brief, specific analyses of particular aspects of a topic, written by the scholars and researchers who came up with the ideas or discovered the findings.
- **Manuscript collections** - collected writings, notes, letters, diaries, and other unpublished works.
- **Newspaper ads**
- **Newspaper or magazine articles** written AT THE TIME of an event, stories on a breaking issue, or journalists reporting the results of their investigations.
- **Original reports and research** (results of experiments, survey research, fieldwork, lab reports, experiments, observations, etc.)
- **Patents**
- **Recordings** - audio, video, photographs.
- **Statistics** and other tabulated data which has not been interpreted
- **Web/Internet** - Web sites that publish the author's findings or research, e.g. your professor's home page listing research results. Note: use extreme caution when using the Internet as a primary source. Remember, on the Internet, a page citing authoritative findings could have been published by **anyone** in the world.
- **Works of art or literature** (poems, short stories, paintings, etc.)

## Examples of secondary sources

- **Biographies**
- **Books** - Detailed analysis by scholars and experts with criticisms, commentaries, and interpretation of primary ideas and findings.
- **Commentaries**
- **Dissertations**
- **Journal articles** - Shorter and more specific analysis, criticisms, commentaries, and interpretations of particular aspects of primary ideas and findings.
- **Literature reviews** - summaries of current primary literature within a specific field.
- **Newspaper articles** - Articles which report on earlier findings, or offer commentary or opinions.
- **Scholarly web sites** - Published by scholars/experts in a subject
- **Web/Internet** - Web sites that comment on earlier findings or research. (Note: use extreme caution when using the Internet as a source. Remember, on the Internet, a page citing authoritative findings could have been published by **anyone** in the world.)

## Examples of tertiary sources

- **Almanacs** - Good place to check for brief factual information and lists.
- **Databases and indexes** - These are key sources to check for articles on your topic. They can cover many subjects (Expanded Academic) or subject-specific (Social Work Abstracts.)
- **Dictionaries** - Use these for definitions or summaries of terms, ideas, etc. Dictionaries can be general (American Heritage, Webster's) or subject-specific (Dictionary of American History.)
- **Directories** - Good for quick lookups for company addresses, phone numbers, etc.
- **Encyclopedias** - Encyclopedia articles can provide an introduction to a topic, or a summary of key points. Encyclopedias can be general (Encyclopedia Britannica) or subject-specific (Encyclopedia of Social Work.)
- **Popular magazine or newspaper articles**
- **Textbooks**
- **Web sites** of general interest.