

# Primary And Secondary Source Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Identifying Primary & Secondary Sources

Historians use different kinds of sources to study the past.

**Primary sources** are accounts from people who witness historical events and are usually created when the events take place.  
**Examples:** • speeches • newspaper stories • diaries • letters • photographs • posters

**Secondary sources** are written by historians or other people who research historical events by studying primary sources and are usually created later in time.  
**Examples:** • academic articles • history books • textbooks • documentaries

**Non-historical sources** are fictional stories set in the past. Their purpose is to entertain rather than inform, so they are not used to study history.  
**Examples:** • television shows • movies • historical fiction books

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the table on different sources related to World War II (1939-1945). Decide whether each source is **primary**, **secondary**, or **non-historical**.

	PRIMARY SOURCE	SECONDARY SOURCE	NON-HISTORICAL SOURCE
1. Saving Private Ryan, a Hollywood film from 1998 about a rescue mission in 1944.			
2. The Diary of a Young Girl, a book written by a Jewish girl named Anne Frank while she was hiding from Nazi authorities from 1942 to 1944.			
3. The book Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, written by historian Rana Mitter in 2013.			
4. A military recruitment poster made by the U.S. government in 1942.			
5. The War, a Ken Burns documentary from 2007 about the experience of Americans during World War II.			
6. Night Will Fall, a documentary produced in 2014 about concentration camps in Nazi Germany.			
7. The Book Thief, a novel published in 2005 that imagines a fictional German girl's experience growing up during World War Two.			
8. A political cartoon drawn by Dr. Seuss in 1940, arguing that America should enter World War II.			

**Primary and secondary source worksheet** is an essential educational tool that helps students and researchers distinguish between different types of sources of information. Understanding the differences between primary and secondary sources is crucial in the academic world, as it allows individuals to evaluate the credibility and relevance of the information they are using in their research. This article will explore the definitions, characteristics, and examples of primary and secondary sources, as well as how a worksheet can serve as an effective learning resource.

## Understanding Primary and Secondary Sources

When engaging with historical events, social sciences, or various academic subjects, it is important to categorize sources of information into two main types: primary and secondary sources.

### What Are Primary Sources?

Primary sources are original materials that provide direct evidence or firsthand accounts of an event, person, or time period. These sources are created by individuals who experienced the event or were present during the time it occurred. They offer a unique perspective and allow researchers to

analyze the context in which they were created.

Characteristics of Primary Sources:

- Created at the time of the event or shortly after.
- Provide direct evidence or firsthand accounts.
- Often reflect the author's personal experience or viewpoint.

Examples of Primary Sources:

1. Diaries and journals
2. Letters and correspondence
3. Official documents (e.g., birth certificates, treaties)
4. Photographs and videos
5. Artifacts and objects (e.g., tools, clothing)
6. Interviews and oral histories
7. Newspapers and magazine articles published at the time of the event

## **What Are Secondary Sources?**

Secondary sources, on the other hand, analyze, interpret, or summarize primary sources. They are created by individuals who did not experience the event firsthand but have studied the primary materials to gain insights. Secondary sources provide context and commentary, helping to understand the significance of primary sources.

Characteristics of Secondary Sources:

- Created after the event has occurred.
- Analyze, interpret, or summarize primary sources.
- Often involve a degree of synthesis or evaluation.

Examples of Secondary Sources:

1. Biographies and autobiographies
2. History books and textbooks
3. Documentaries and films that analyze historical events
4. Journal articles that review or critique prior research
5. Encyclopedias and reference materials
6. Reviews and critiques of works (e.g., book reviews)

## **The Importance of Differentiating Between Primary and Secondary Sources**

Understanding the distinction between primary and secondary sources is vital for several reasons:

1. **Credibility of Information:** Primary sources provide unfiltered access to information, while secondary sources may include biases or interpretations. Evaluating sources helps ensure accuracy in research.

2. Depth of Analysis: Engaging with primary sources allows researchers to form their own interpretations, while secondary sources can provide context and background knowledge that enriches understanding.

3. Research Skills Development: Mastering the ability to differentiate between source types is a critical skill in academia, enhancing critical thinking and analytical capabilities.

## **Creating a Primary and Secondary Source Worksheet**

A primary and secondary source worksheet can serve as an effective educational tool for students learning how to identify and analyze different types of sources. This worksheet can help guide students through the process of evaluating sources, making it easier to determine their relevance and reliability.

## **Components of a Primary and Secondary Source Worksheet**

When designing a worksheet, it is important to include sections that facilitate understanding and engagement. Here are key components to consider:

### **1. Definitions Section:**

- Include clear definitions of primary and secondary sources.
- Provide examples for each category.

### **2. Source Identification Exercise:**

- Create a list of different sources (e.g., articles, photographs, interviews) and ask students to categorize them as primary or secondary.
- Include a column for students to explain their reasoning.

### **3. Comparison Chart:**

- Include a chart that outlines the key differences between primary and secondary sources.
- Use bullet points for clarity.

### **4. Analysis Questions:**

- Pose questions that encourage critical thinking about the sources. For example:
  - What is the significance of the source?
  - Who created it, and what perspective do they bring?
  - How does the source contribute to the understanding of the topic?

### **5. Reflection Section:**

- Allow space for students to reflect on their learning. They can consider

how understanding the differences between source types will affect their future research.

## **Using the Primary and Secondary Source Worksheet in the Classroom**

Teachers can effectively integrate the primary and secondary source worksheet into their lesson plans in various ways:

**1. Introduction to Research Skills:**

- Use the worksheet at the beginning of a research unit to familiarize students with source types.

**2. Group Activities:**

- Assign students to work in groups to complete the worksheet, fostering collaboration and discussion about the materials.

**3. Assessment Tool:**

- Utilize the worksheet as a formative assessment to gauge students' understanding of the concepts.

**4. Project Basis:**

- Require students to use both primary and secondary sources in a research project, guiding them to fill out the worksheet as they gather information.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a primary and secondary source worksheet is a vital educational resource that aids students and researchers in distinguishing between different types of sources. Understanding the characteristics, importance, and applications of primary and secondary sources enhances research skills, critical thinking, and comprehension of historical context. By using a worksheet, educators can effectively teach these concepts, ensuring that students are well-equipped to engage with a variety of sources in their academic endeavors.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the primary purpose of a primary and secondary source worksheet?**

The primary purpose of a primary and secondary source worksheet is to help students and researchers differentiate between primary sources, which provide

direct evidence or firsthand accounts, and secondary sources, which analyze, interpret, or summarize primary sources.

## **What types of materials are considered primary sources?**

Primary sources include original documents such as diaries, letters, interviews, photographs, official records, artifacts, and any other materials that provide direct evidence from a specific time period or event.

## **Can you provide an example of a secondary source?**

An example of a secondary source would be a history book that discusses and analyzes events from the past, using primary sources to support its conclusions.

## **How can a primary and secondary source worksheet enhance critical thinking skills?**

A primary and secondary source worksheet can enhance critical thinking skills by encouraging students to analyze sources, evaluate their credibility, and understand the context in which they were created, leading to deeper insights into historical and contemporary issues.

## **Are digital sources considered primary or secondary?**

Digital sources can be either primary or secondary depending on their content; for instance, a digital archive of letters would be a primary source, while a blog post analyzing those letters would be a secondary source.

## **What skills do students develop by completing a primary and secondary source worksheet?**

By completing a primary and secondary source worksheet, students develop skills in source evaluation, critical analysis, research methodology, and the ability to differentiate between types of information, which are essential for academic success.

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## **Primary And Secondary Source Worksheet**

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