



# Primary vs. Secondary Sources

What's the difference between them?

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
<p><b>Definition:</b> Main text or work that you are discussing, actual data or research results, or historical documents. Also: first-hand testimony.</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Records generated by an event but written by non-participants in the event. Based on/derived from primary sources - but they have been interpreted, or analyzed.</p>
Examples	Examples
<p><b>Diaries,</b> journals, speeches, interviews, letters, memos, manuscripts, memoirs, autobiographies, government records, records of organizations (e.g. minutes, reports, correspondence)</p> <p><b>Published materials</b> (books and journal/newspaper articles) written AT THE TIME about a particular event</p> <p><b>Documentary:</b> photographs, audio recordings, movies or videos</p> <p><b>Public opinion polls,</b> field notes, scientific experiments, artifacts</p> <p><b>Reprinted primary sources</b> (often in reference books such as: <u>Speeches of the American Presidents</u> and <u>Documents of American History</u>)</p> <p><b>Maps,</b> oral histories, postcards, court records, paintings, sculptures, consumer surveys, patents, schematic drawings, technical reports, personal accounts, jewelry, private papers, deeds, wills, proceedings, census data</p>	<p><b>Encyclopedias,</b> chronologies, fact books</p> <p><b>Biographies,</b> monographs, dissertations</p> <p><b>General histories</b></p> <p><b>Most journal articles</b> (except those discussed in column one)</p> <p><b>Most published books</b> (except those discussed in column one)</p>