

Primary Sources

What is a primary source?

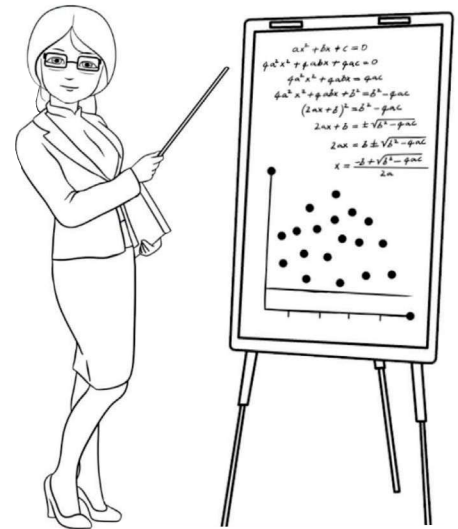
A primary source provides direct or first-hand evidence.

Why are primary sources important?

Secondary sources often reflect someone's interpretation of the facts—instead of the actual facts. This is a huge reason why it's so crucial to access the primary source.

How can you use primary sources in your research?

- 1. Learn to identify what is a primary source and what is not.** Common primary sources are government reports, datasets, papers in academic journals, uncut videos, and complete transcripts.
- 2. Be ready to dig.** The internet has made primary sources far more available than any time in human history, but finding them sometimes requires digging back from one source, to another, to another.
- 3. Don't give up.** Internet searches often yield a lot of shoddy content. Don't stop at the first ten results.
- 4. Get the whole story.** Once you find the primary source, examine it critically and consider its caveats and limitations.



REMEMBER: If a source relies on another source or does not provide documented evidence, it is not the primary source for that information.