

Understanding Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Sources

1. Match each example as Primary, Secondary, or Tertiary by writing it into the correct box.

<p>Primary</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	<p>Tertiary</p>
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Word Bank

Organic Chemistry Textbook U.S. Senate Report Interview User's Manual
Book Review Literature Review Current News Article Lab Notebook
Economic Concepts Dictionary A Poem Diary
World Almanac & Book of Facts

2. Match each example as Primary, Secondary, or Tertiary by writing it into the correct box.

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
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Word Bank			
Musical Composition	Patent	Art Critique	Autobiography
Encyclopedia of Civil War Medicine	Case Study	Texas Handbook	
Oxford English Dictionary	Biography	Book on Underground Railroad	
Letter by Abraham Lincoln	A Scholarly Article in the Journal of Ideas		

3. Primary sources in the humanities are records that provide first-hand testimony or evidence of an event, action, topic, or time period. Primary sources are usually created by individual who directly experience an event or topic, and record their experience.
- True
 - False
4. Primary Sources in the social sciences and natural sciences report the researcher's results/findings/data from their own original research, ideas, experiments, or scientific discoveries. They may be referred to as primary research.
- True
 - False

5. Secondary Sources interpret, analyze, critique, or comment on information found in primary sources and put them into context. They are usually written by individuals who did not experience the events first-hand.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. Tertiary Sources compile, distill, and summarize factual information obtained from other (usually secondary) sources.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. A key difference between secondary and tertiary sources is that:
 - a. Tertiary sources often contain a thesis or argument, but secondary sources do not.
 - b. Secondary sources often contain a thesis or argument, but tertiary sources do not.
 - c. There is no way to tell the difference between a secondary and tertiary source.

8. Which statement is correct?
 - a. A book is a primary source.
 - b. A book is a secondary source.
 - c. It could be either, depending on the content and context.

9. A good secondary source should contain or make reference to primary source in the text, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliography.
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. No one clue is enough to identify whether an item is a primary, secondary, or tertiary source. Consider the list of questions below and check each question that you should consider when deciding if an item is a primary, secondary, or tertiary source.
 - Who is the author / creator?
 - What is the author's point of view (first person, third person)?
 - When was the source written / created?
 - What is the publication date?
 - Who is the publisher?
 - Does the author present a thesis or argument?
 - Is the only factual information?
 - Is the source a first-hand account / direct experience?
 - Does the source analyze, critique, interpret, or place an event in context?

Understanding Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Sources Answer Key

1. Match each example as Primary, Secondary, or Tertiary by writing it into the correct box.
 - **Primary:** U.S. Senate Report, A Poem, Lab Notebook, Diary, Interview
 - **Secondary:** Book Review, Current News Article, Literature Review
 - **Tertiary:** Organic Chemistry Textbook, Economic Concepts Dictionary, User's Manual, World Almanac Book of Facts
2. Match each example as Primary, Secondary, or Tertiary by writing it into the correct box.
 - **Primary:** Musical Composition, Case Study, Patent, Autobiography, Letter Written by Abraham Lincoln
 - **Secondary:** Art Critique, Book on Underground Railroad, Biography, A Scholarly Article in the Journal of Ideas
 - **Tertiary:** Encyclopedia of Civil War Medicine, Oxford English Dictionary, Texas Handbook
3. **True:** Primary sources in the humanities are records that provide first-hand testimony or evidence of an event, action, topic, or time period. Primary sources are usually created by individuals who directly experience an event or topic, and record their experience.
4. **True:** They are researchers reporting the results/findings/data from their own original research and experiments.
5. **True:** Secondary Sources interpret, analyze, critique, or comment on information found in primary sources and put them into context. They are usually written by individuals who did not experience the events firsthand.
6. **True:** Tertiary sources compile, distill, and summarize factual information obtained from other (usually secondary) sources.
7. **B:** Secondary sources often contain a thesis or argument, but tertiary sources do not.
8. **C:** It could be either, it depends on the content & context.
9. **True:** A good secondary source should contain or make reference to primary sources in the text, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliography.
10. **All choices are correct.** You should consider all of these questions when deciding if an item is a primary, secondary, or tertiary source.