



HISTORICAL SOURCES

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Project: 2019-1-EL01- KA229-062592

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.



What is a **historical source**?

- It is an original source **that contains important historical information**. A historical source **tells us something about history**. It may be a document, a picture, a sound recording, a book, a cinema film, a television program or an object.



Primary and Secondary Historical Sources

Historians separate historical sources into two categories: **Primary** and **Secondary**.

- A Primary source is a first –hand material that comes from the past.
- A Secondary source is second – hand material that gives us information about the primary source.

Types and examples of Primary historical sources.

Types of Primary Sources	Examples
Published documents	books, magazines, newspapers, government documents, reports, advertisements, maps, posters, legal documents, poems and other kinds of literature
Unpublished documents	personal letters, diaries, wills, deeds and school report cards
Visual documents	photographs, posters, cartoons, films and paintings
Relics or Artefacts	pottery, furniture, clothing, buildings and other excavated physical items



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Types and examples of Secondary historical sources.

Types of Secondary Sources	Examples
Books	popular history books, textbooks, academic works, and printed theses
Academic Journal articles	scholarly research undertaken by university academics is published in academic journals.
Websites	Most websites that come up on a Google search are not of sufficient quality for high school or university essays. If you choose to use websites as secondary sources, make sure you only use websites from respectable individuals or institutions (universities, museums, government archives, etc.).



Are historical sources always reliable?

- Historical sources both primary and secondary should be seen with a critical eye.
- We should cross - examine different types of sources on the same topic.
- Asking questions will help us understand and evaluate the reliability of our source.

Some questions we should ask are:

- What type of source is it?
- Who created the source?
- Was the creator an eye witness? Could he be biased?
- With which goal was the source created?
- When was the source created?

Resources

- <https://www.ancient.eu>
- <https://www.historyskills.com>

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