



TEC Library

Library Letters

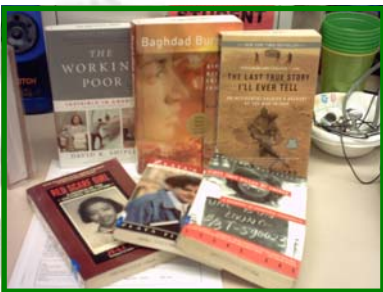
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Not Sure? Check the Primary Source!

Teachers rightly require students to "diversify" their sources when doing research—admonishing them to look at multiple resources rather than just relying on the Internet. Yet, a great majority of typical sources accessible to students are **secondary** sources—materials edited and interpreted by others. Less often are students instructed to seek out and use **primary resources**. Thus, students lack familiarity with primary resources and may not understand their purpose or how to use them effectively. Yet, primary resources are an invaluable part of any information search.



Simply put, a primary resource is any unedited and un-interpreted material produced contemporary with a specific era, event or issue. It is generally a "first-hand" account (observed directly), although some "second-hand" accounts (heard about) might also be considered primary resources depending on circumstances. For instance, a response to 9-11 written by someone living in LA can still be primary if it was written as a response to the event **at that time**.



Additionally, the more time that has passed between the actual occurrence and the source creation, as well the more "mouths" said information

has passed through, the less reliable it must be considered.

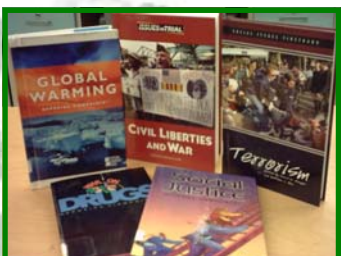
Primary sources come in a variety of media, not just the written word, including, photographs, film, poems, works of art, sculpture, music, newspaper articles, diaries, oral histories, letters and so on. Of key importance is that the primary resource is presented **as it is**, without editing or interpretation. Two other "rules" include a "time and place" rule—meaning that the closer it is to the time and place it represents, the better the source—, and an understanding of a "bias" rule which recognizes that all sources are biased in some way and that the creator's point of view must be considered in any interpretation.



It's important to remember that a primary source is not always the same as an "original work" (by a particular person/group). For example, a novel or short story is an "original work", but that is not to say it is a **primary source**. Only if the novel has something to say about a particular era, person or issue **that is contemporary with its creation** might it be sufficient as a primary source in the form of a

work of art. Much also depends on the actual experiences of the author. Otherwise, it becomes a secondary resource since the creator must rely on other sources for information. This can also be true of some memoirs.

Check out [this link](#) for more information.



Any underlined blue items below are links

Know Your Library!

The Tye Complex library has a fairly substantial number of primary source materials. Among the best are

- ***Social Issues Primary Sources Collection*** published by Thomson-Gale—these books contain a wide array of primary source materials in six volumes, including speeches, photographs, essays, government treaties and laws, newspaper articles and so on. Subjects include the environment, terrorism, social policy, immigration, government, politics and protest and human and civil rights.
- ***Opposing Viewpoints, Issues on Trial, At Issue, Social Issues Firsthand, Current Controversies, Taking Sides*** and any number of current issue anthologies contain essays written by experts in the subject that provide a spectrum of opinion.
- Various memoirs that are concurrent with a time, place and event that the writer experienced, and non-fiction by original/expert thinkers in a field such as Carson's *Silent Spring* or Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*.

[Library Services](#) [Library Brochure](#)

Reminders for Library Use

Library Reminder #5:

Laptops are available for check-out and use **in the library ONLY**. Students must have a student or picture ID to check one out, and it must be returned before leaving.

Library Reminder #6:

Students can check out materials from the library **ONLY** if they have a student ID or another form of PICTURE ID (driver's license, passport), and **NO** overdue materials.

TEACHER\$ and \$TAFF: Avoid checking out books in your name and then loaning them to students. It can result in the teacher paying for them at the end of the year.

Monthly Drawing Winner #5!

Congratulations to **AMANDA OUCH**, a Global student. She won a \$25 gift card from Barnes & Noble.

For more information about how students can participate, click on the link above and print out the poster to put up in your classroom. **The next drawing will be March 27.**

Contact your TEC Librarian by email: carlsolm@hds401.org
By phone: 988-7230 or visit the [TEC Library Website](#)