

Primary and Secondary Sources

5th Grade

Who was there, and who wrote about it afterwards.

PRIMARY

- Made at the time by someone there
- A diary, a letter, a photograph
- An object, a map, a speech
- Closest to what happened
- Still only one point of view

SECONDARY

- Made later by someone who was not there
- A textbook, a documentary
- An encyclopaedia article
- Gathers many sources together
- Can spot patterns one witness cannot

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Primary sources are closer but narrower. Secondary sources are broader but further away. Historians need both.

Always ask: who made this, when, and what did they want the reader to think?