

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SOURCES

As you conduct research, you will consult different sources of information. A professor may request **primary**, **secondary**, or **tertiary** sources. What does that mean? This guide explains the terms and gives examples of some primary, secondary and tertiary sources.

<p>Primary Sources - Primary sources are original materials. They are from the time period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diaries• Interviews (legal proceedings, personal, telephone, e-mail)• Letters• Original Documents (i.e. birth certificate or a trial transcript)• Patents• Photographs• Proceedings of Meetings, Conferences and Symposia.• Survey Research (such as market surveys and public opinion polls)• Works of Literature
<p>Secondary Sources - Secondary sources are accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Secondary sources are not evidence, but rather commentary on and discussion of evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biographies• Commentaries• Dissertations• Indexes, Abstracts, Bibliographies (used to locate primary & secondary sources)• Journal Articles• Monographs
<p>Tertiary Sources - Tertiary sources consist of information which is a distillation and collection of primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almanacs• Encyclopedias• Fact books