

Activity ➔ 51

Using primary and secondary sources

STUDENT HANDOUT

Read the definitions of 'primary sources' and 'secondary sources' given below. Once you have done this, work together with your group members to compile two lists: one of primary sources and one of secondary sources. We will then hold a class discussion to talk about the issues raised by this exercise.

'Primary sources' are first-hand narratives, original documents, original objects or factual accounts that were written, recorded or made during or close to the event or period of time. They have a direct connection to a person, time, event or place. Primary sources have not been subject to processing, manipulation, analysis or interpretation by others.

'Secondary sources' interpret, analyse and critique primary sources. They provide a second-hand version of events, or an interpretation or critique of first-hand accounts, conditions or objects. Secondary sources tell a story one or more steps removed from the original person, time, place, event or object.

Learning outcome: By the end of this activity you will know what is meant by primary and secondary sources and will have a greater understanding of how to find, choose, use, cite, reference and manage both primary and secondary sources in your academic work.