

Primary and Secondary Sources

A Brief Overview

Primary Sources

- A contemporary account of an event
- Written by someone who experienced or witnessed an event
- Can be published or unpublished

Common Primary Sources

- Diary Entries
- Magazine or Newspaper Articles
- Photographs
- Audio and Video Recordings
- Memoirs
- Speeches
- Interviews

Analyzing Primary Sources

- Discuss with students the benefits and disadvantages of primary sources
 - First Hand accounts can provide details into what it was like to live during the event
 - Primary sources are often skewed by human emotion

Analyzing Primary Sources

- Create an age appropriate way to analyze Primary Sources in your classroom
- Example: SCARABS
- S- source
- C- circumstance
- A- author
- R- reason
- A- audience
- B- bias
- S- significance

Analyzing Primary Sources

- *Report to the Massachusetts Legislature*
- S- Report to the Massachusetts Legislature 1843
- C- observations on the conditions of the mentally ill of Massachusetts
- A- Dorothea Dix
- R- to persuade the legislature to create better conditions for the mentally ill
- A- men of the Massachusetts Legislature
- B- pro- Social Reform
- S- possibly the first piece of social research conducted in the United States

Secondary Sources

- A source written after the event occurred
- Combines research of many primary sources
- Often a published work

Common Secondary Sources

- Classroom textbook
- Essays
- Biographies
- Documentaries
- Any books written about a period or event in history

Secondary Sources

- Discuss with students the benefits and disadvantages of using secondary sources
 - Source is often more subjective and can combine several opinions on a topic
 - The author is not an eye witness to the event