Primary and Secondary Sources

A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time you’re studying. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event.

Some types of primary sources include:

* ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: Diaries, speeches, manuscripts, letters, interviews, news film footage, autobiographies, official records
* CREATIVE WORKS: Poetry, drama, novels, music, art
* RELICS OR ARTIFACTS: Pottery, furniture, clothing, buildings

Examples of primary sources include:

* Diary of Anne Frank - Experiences of a Jewish family during WWII
* The Constitution of Australia – Australian History
* Mummies - Egyptian history

A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them.

Some types of secondary sources include:

* PUBLICATIONS: Textbooks, magazine articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, encyclopedias

Examples of secondary sources include:

* A journal/magazine article which interprets or reviews previous findings
* A history textbook
* A book about the effects of WWI