



“Understanding Primary and Secondary Sources”

Educator Guide

Lesson Objectives

- Students will define primary and secondary sources by their unique and distinct characteristics.
- Students will apply those definitions to sources to determine whether they are primary or secondary.
- Students will evaluate the perspective shared in each source and its appropriate use for historical thinking and research.

Lesson Competencies

- I can analyze different accounts of the same event or topic and note differences in information presented, authors' points of view, or text types, such as primary and secondary sources. (ELA 3)
- I can analyze primary sources and secondary sources and draw appropriate conclusions. (Moose SS)
- I can interpret and use information delivered orally or visually and respond by asking relevant questions, summarizing key points, or elaborating on ideas. (ELA 7)

Essential Questions

How has New Hampshire come to be the way it is?

Estimated Time

Two 40-minute class sessions

Materials & Equipment

“Which Source Doesn’t Belong?” worksheet for projection
Class set of “Face Off: Primary vs. Secondary Sources” worksheet
Class set of “Analyze It! Primary or Secondary Source?” worksheet
Source 1: “A Willys being towed through at Ossipee Valley N.H.,” 1936, for printing and/or projection
Source 2: *Historical New Hampshire*, 2016, for printing and/or projection



Educator Introduction & Rationale

What's the difference between primary and secondary sources? How do students use them appropriately? Under what circumstances is one more useful than the other? These basic questions drive this Social Studies Methods lesson. As students discover the answers, they develop crucial skills for research and critical thinking. Defining and analyzing primary and secondary sources are vital skills that need much practice. Starting by 4th grade is important so that students build their skills throughout their educational career and achieve a level of mastery by adulthood where these skills are life skills. Please note, lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of the document. You may wish to preview these with your students.

In this lesson, students evaluate two items related to the same topic and determine if each item is a primary or secondary source. Students will consider the different perspectives on the topic presented by each source and determine the benefits and limitations of each type of source. The lesson procedures are also easily adaptable for additional sources of your choosing.

Two reinforcement activities are suggested for students who will benefit from spending more time with the concepts in this lesson. Extension activities are suggested for students who are ready for a more complex exploration of primary and secondary sources. Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom.

Learning Activity

Activation

One of these sources is not like the others. Project the “Which Source Doesn’t Belong?” worksheet and ask students to look closely at the four images shown. They all have things in common and distinctive traits. Ask the students what they notice about how the sources are similar and different.

Possible outcomes:

- Students may comment on the shape of the items and whether pictures are present.
- Students may observe some items have more words, while some have some or none.
- Students may notice the presence or absence of people.
- Students may observe some items appear older than others.
- Eventually, guide students to realize that:
 - all four items are sources of information in some way.
 - a source is simply something that supplies information.
 - The picture shows a snapshot of a moment in time in 1908.
 - The document shows the proclamation about Old Home Day and what it was for.
 - The letter shows an interaction between two historical figures.
 - The journal tells about topics in history.
- Guide students to understand that image C, *Historical New Hampshire*, seems different from the others.
 - It has information about many subjects, while the other sources are specific to one subject.
 - It is written by people who did research to find out about subjects after the events.
 - The other sources were created by people who experienced or knew first-hand about the subject at the time of the event.

Direct Instruction

Primary or secondary: What’s the big difference? Whether or not students were able to differentiate between image C and the others, reiterate that all four images show sources of information but that A, B, and D are primary sources of information—first-hand or original pieces of information—while C is a secondary source, created to share information about events after they have occurred, often by interpreting primary sources.

Guided Practice & Discussion

Using sources. Ask students why they think it’s important to know about these different types of sources. Using a turn and talk, or preferred discussion strategy, discuss: How and when would students use these kinds of sources?



Possible outcomes:

- The picture might be used to study the history of Mt. Washington or to compare tourism to today.
- The document may be used to study the history of New Hampshire holidays.
- The letter may be used to study the Revolutionary period.
- The journal may be used to get a historian's perspective.
- Students should conclude different types of sources give different perspectives on a topic.

If all sources give different perspectives on a topic, ask students how each of the sources may be biased, or give different perspectives.

- All sources are the perspective of the person who created them.
- The picture may include or not include people or objects.
- The document may be written to appeal to certain kinds of people.
- The letter is Washington's ideas.
- The journal is the perspective of the writers.

Students need to learn to identify when the creator has a perspective that does not allow for hearing or seeing another side of the story. How are the perspectives of primary and secondary sources different?

- A primary source is more likely to give a perspective that is "in the moment" of the historical event.
- A secondary source is often constructed sometime after the event.
- Primary sources, particularly letters and diaries may only share one view of a situation, which could be biased toward a certain conclusion.
- Secondary sources can be filtered through someone else's opinion and perspective.

Provide students with the "Face-Off: Primary vs. Secondary Sources" worksheet. Read through the features of primary and secondary sources together. Then ask students to complete the worksheet, independently or in pairs. Review the answers as a whole group.

Teaching tip: This is a good spot to pause if you will divide the lesson between two teaching periods.

Independent Practice

Primary or secondary? Tell students they will use the features on the sheet to analyze two different sources on the same topic from New Hampshire's history and figure out which is a primary source and which is a secondary source.

Project or distribute printouts of the photograph source 1: "A Willys being towed through at Ossipee Valley N.H.," 1936, and the photocopy of source 2: *Historical New Hampshire*. Explain to students that both sources are related to a real natural disaster that had a huge impact on New Hampshire: the flood of 1936 that resulted in \$100 million in damage throughout New England.



Provide students with the "Analyze It! Primary or Secondary Source?" worksheet. Ask students to work independently or in pairs to complete the analysis activity up to the Build section.

Reflection

Building on knowledge. Gather as a whole group and share what was discovered about the two sources. Then ask students to think about how they would use these sources to do research about the flood of 1936 and then independently answer the Build question on the worksheet. Share answers as a class. Depending on how the students answer the question, you may want them to complete a reinforcement or extension activity.

Reflect back. If students struggled with the "Which Source Doesn't Belong?" worksheet used in the Activation of this lesson, project it again. Ask students if they are now more able to decide which of the sources are primary and which of the sources are secondary. Encourage students to provide evidence for their answers.

Reinforcement

1. **Individual research.** Create a short list of topics, ideally related to New Hampshire history, that students could look up in an encyclopedia. Ask students to find the encyclopedia entries online or provide printed copies of the entries. Then allow students to use the Media Library on the Educators side of the Moose on the Loose website or the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) to find a primary source that relates to the secondary source encyclopedia entry. Students then compare the sources using the "Analyze It! Primary or Secondary Source?" worksheet provided with this lesson.
2. **Morning meeting practice.** Gather examples of primary and secondary sources and put them in a basket. During morning meeting, have students pick a source and explain why that source is a primary or secondary source. They should be sure to give evidence to support their ideas and defend their position.

Extension

1. **Extending source understanding.** Revisit the "Face-Off: Primary Sources vs. Secondary Sources" worksheet. If students identified an item as a primary source, can they think of an example of a secondary source that might be created using that primary source? Or, if they think something is a secondary source, what might be the primary source material that was used to create that secondary source? Suggested answers are included in the Answer Key.
2. **Newspapers: primary or secondary?** Provide students with the front page from "*Manchester Leader*, March 19, 1936." Ask students to consider if a newspaper story published at the time of the flood is a primary or secondary source. Reporters have to go to places, interview people, and record information as they see it. How is this a primary source? How is it a secondary source? Recognize with students that these are complex questions that have no easy answers!



Supporting Materials

New Hampshire Historical Society Resources

1. Letter from George Washington to John Stark, January 3, 1781; Object ID: 1918.005.01.15.012
2. Cog Railway, circa 1908; Object ID: 07.02.02.055.001d (9)
3. *Historical New Hampshire*, Vol. 69, No. 3, Fall 2016; Call No. 977.8 N5321h
4. Proclamation for old home week, 1900; Object ID: S 1997.554.27
5. A Willys being towed through at Ossipee Valley N.H., 1936; Object ID 07.02.02.112.001 (12)
6. Referred to as *Historical New Hampshire*: "Perseverance on the Merrimack: The Challenges and Transformation of the Amoskeag Millyard, 1935–1980," Kelly M. Kilcrease, *Historical New Hampshire* 69.3 (Fall 2016), p. 192
7. Front Page of March 19, 1936 edition of the *Manchester Leader and Evening Union*.

Standards

"Moose on the Loose" Skills

- ✓ Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence (3-5.S1.1. 3-5.S1.2)

National Council for the Social Studies Themes

- ✓ Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

C3 Frameworks

- ✓ Determining Helpful Sources (D1.5.3-5)
- ✓ Historical Sources and Evidence (D2.His.10.3-5)
- ✓ Gathering and Evaluating Sources (D3.2.3-5)

Common Core ELA

- ✓ Craft and Structure in Informational Text (RI.4.6)
- ✓ Comprehension and Collaboration in Speaking and Listening (SL.4.3)

Lesson Vocabulary

bias	(noun) An attitude that always favors one way of feeling or acting over any other
perspective	(noun) The point of view expressed through writing, speech, photographs, and other sources of information
primary source	(noun) An original source of information created by someone who was part of or who witnessed the events described or shown
secondary source	(noun) A source of information created by someone who researched a topic, often using primary sources, to explain or analyze the topic
source	(noun) Something that supplies information

Which Source Doesn't Belong?

Look closely at these images. What do they have in common? Which one seems different?

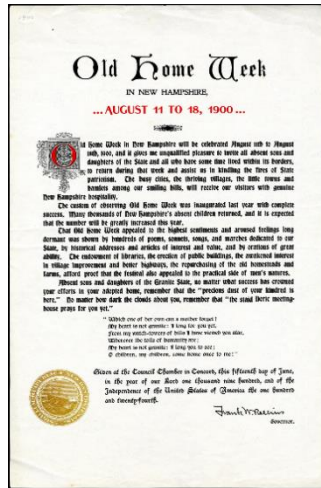


Image A:

Announcement by
governor's office
in 1900.



Image B:

A picture taken
in 1908.

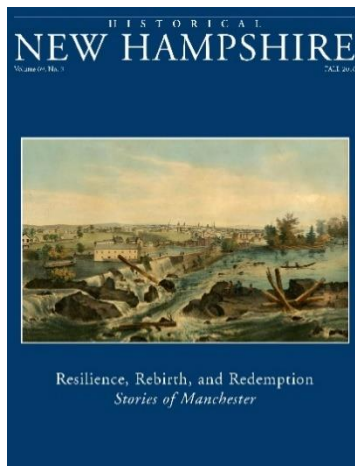


Image C:

A journal written
by historians.

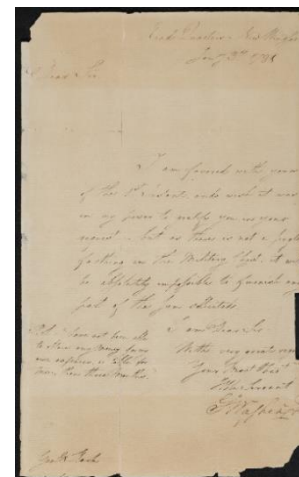


Image D:

A letter by
George
Washington
in 1781.



Source for all images: New Hampshire Historical Society

Which Source Doesn't Belong? Additional Details/Answer Key

Look closely at these images. What do they have in common? Which one seems different?

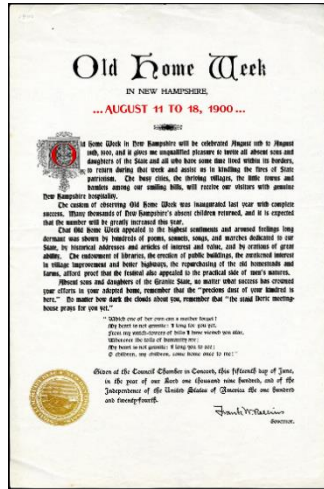


Image A: New Hampshire Governor Frank Rollins's 1900 proclamation of a new statewide celebration: Old Home Week

Primary source



Image B: A 1908 picture of passengers aboard a railcar that takes guests to visit the base of Mount Washington.

Primary source

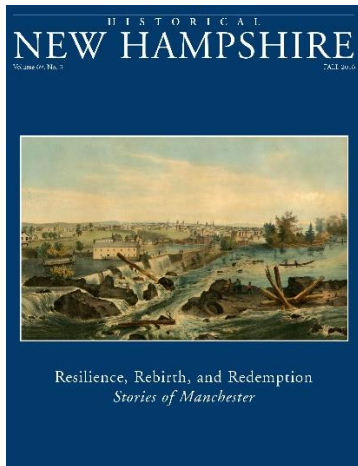


Image C: The Fall 2016 issue of *Historical New Hampshire*, a journal published by the New Hampshire Historical Society. It contains articles by historians about different topics in New Hampshire's history.

Secondary source

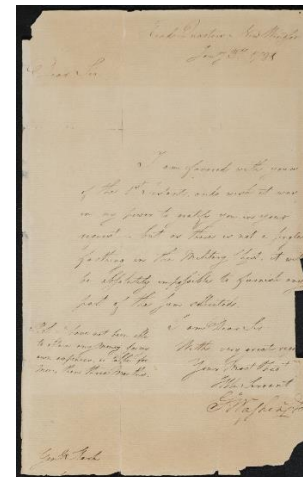


Image D: A letter from General George Washington to General John Stark, dated January 3, 1781.

Primary source

Source for all images: New Hampshire Historical Society





Name_____

Face Off: Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Primary Source	Secondary Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First-hand information about something• Original work or information about a topic or events• Often created at the time of the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second-hand information about something• Can be a description or analysis of information from a primary source• Often created after the event

Using the features above to guide your thinking, try to label each of these sources as primary or secondary. Write "P" for primary or "S" for secondary in the box next to the source description.

Source description	Primary or Secondary?
1. A letter from General George Washington telling General John Stark there is no money to pay his soldiers	
2. An encyclopedia entry about the invention of the Cog Railway and its use as a means of transportation on Mount Washington	
3. An online review of a new movie	
4. A recording of Martin Luther King Jr. delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech	
5. A chapter in a science textbook about the life cycle of a bean plant	
6. A 1905 photograph of the New England League champion baseball team from Concord, New Hampshire	



Name _____ Answer Key _____

Face Off: Primary vs. Secondary Sources

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Using the features above to guide your thinking, try to label each of these sources as primary or secondary. Write "P" for primary or "S" for secondary in the box next to the source description.

Source description	Primary or Secondary?
1. A letter from General George Washington telling General John Stark there is no money to pay his soldiers	P – This is an original piece of information created by a person involved in the events. A secondary source would be a biography of John Stark that mentions the letter.
2. An encyclopedia entry about the invention of the Cog Railway and its use as a means of transportation on Mt. Washington	S – This is a general summary of events that happened in the past, using multiple primary sources. A primary source would be inventor Sylvester Marsh's patent for the Cog Railway machinery.
3. A story about how a new movie was made	S – This is a study of the work to make a movie, and the information for it would have been gathered from interviews or a press packet. The primary source is the movie itself or interview with the movie's director.
4. A recording of Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering his famous "I Have a Dream" speech	P – A speech is an original work, created and delivered by an individual sharing their own thoughts. A secondary source on this topic might be a documentary film discussing the impact of King's speech.
5. A chapter in a science textbook about the life cycle of a bean plant	S – This source provides general information gathered by looking at primary sources, such as results from primary source bean plant studies and experiments.
6. A 1905 photograph of the New England League champion baseball team from Concord, New Hampshire	P – A photograph, or any piece of visual art, is an original work, which captures an idea or moment in time. A secondary source might be a book about early baseball teams in New England that discusses the 1905 season of the Concord team.



Name _____

Analyze It! Primary or Secondary Source?

	Source Title:	Source Title:
Encounter Look closely at each source and describe it in as much detail as possible. What kind of source is it: a photograph? A document? An object?		
Investigate Think about what you've learned about the differences between primary and secondary sources. Which source is primary? Which is secondary? What features make you think that?		



Build

Whose point of view or perspective is communicated in this source?

How is this source helpful for learning about the past?

How is this source unhelpful?





Source 1: Flooded Car, 1936



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Source 2: *Historical New Hampshire*, 2016

the Christmas Eve announcement of the company's attempt at another reorganization.¹⁶ Although Amoskeag's fate was probably sealed, reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. bankruptcy laws was an attempt to avoid total liquidation. To assist the company's efforts, unions offered lower wages, and the city proposed lower property taxes.¹⁷ The final blow took place on March 17, 1936, when snow melt and rain storms caused the Merrimack River to overflow the Amoskeag Dam, producing substantial water damage in most of the mill buildings and destroying the machinery and steam pipes on the bottom floors of many buildings. With the damage to the mills estimated at \$2.5 million, there was little choice for the corporation.¹⁸ On June 9, 1936, the trustees of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company voted for complete liquidation; on July 21 the liquidation order was signed by the court, and the process to find buyers for the company's assets began.¹⁹

For Manchester the company's closing coupled with the effects from the Great Depression had immediate and devastating consequences. In October 1936 almost two-thirds of Manchester's

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Name _____ Answer Key _____

Analyze It! Primary or Secondary Source?

	Source: Flooded Car, 1936	Source: <i>Historical New Hampshire</i> , 2016
Encounter Look closely at each source and describe it in as much detail as possible. What kind of source is it: a photograph? A document? An object?	Possible Response: In a black and white photograph, a dark colored car is in water up to the round headlights. The car is surrounded by water and some snow, and trees are in the background. Some trees do not have leaves, some look like pine trees. The style of the car looks old-fashioned and boxy. The year 1936 is written at the top. Along the bottom someone has written words: "A Willys being towed through at Ossipee Valley N.H." Maybe a Willys is the type of car? Being towed must mean the car was stuck in the water.	Possible Response: This is a page of typed words. The words are in a column even on both sides. It looks like an article or a page from a book. The words "Manchester" and "Amoskeag Manufacturing Company" are repeated so might be important. Someone has circled and underlined a sentence that describes how snow melting and rainstorms caused the Merrimack River to overflow on March 17, 1936.
Investigate Think about what you've learned about the differences between primary and secondary sources. Which source is primary? Which is secondary? What features make you think that?	Possible Response: A photograph can capture a historic event when it happens. The flood happened in 1936 and this photograph shows a car in a flood and is dated 1936. This photograph is a primary source. A primary source is a first-hand account of an event or ideas.	Possible Response: This seems to be a long article about Manchester or the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. There is a brief mention of the flood that explains when it happened and how. A secondary source is a second-hand account that explains and analyzes events using information from primary sources. This article is a secondary source.



Build Whose point of view or perspective is communicated in this source? How is this source helpful for learning about the past? How is this source unhelpful?	<p>Possible Response: This photograph shows the perspective of someone who was in the car or someone who came to help.</p> <p>This photograph tells us what New Hampshire looked like when the flood occurred. We see some ways the flood affected people.</p> <p>This primary source does not tell us everything about the flood. It does not tell us what caused the flood, what areas were affected by the flood, or how long it took for the water level to go down. It does not tell us the exact date of the flood or who owned the car. Even though this primary source helps us imagine a specific moment in time, we need to do more research to answer our questions.</p>	<p>Possible Response: This is just part of an article about the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. The author of the article, who is likely a historian, has done research and is putting pieces together to tell a story. A problem mentioned is the flood.</p> <p>This source is helpful because it gives a few more details about when and why the flood happened and explains how it affected a particular business.</p> <p>This source does not tell us how the flood affected other businesses or parts of the state. Even though this secondary source helps us see how an event impacted a particular business, we need to do more research to learn more about the flood and its impact. A source like this also makes it harder to image the flood because we cannot see it.</p>
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CLOUDY

Cloudy and colder tonight and Friday. Probably light rain in the south and light rain or snow in the north portion.
Union-Leader telemeter-thermometer reading, noon to noon: Noon, 51; low, 45 at 6 a. m.; high, 55 at 11 a. m.

THE MANCHESTER LEADER AND EVENING UNION

3 P. M.
FINAL
EDITION

VOLUME XXIV. NO. 134.

MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1936.

PRICE TWO CENTS

WORST FLOOD IN HISTORY PARALYZES ENTIRE STATE

Big Section of City Under Water --- Hundreds Homeless --- Bridges Closed or Washed Away --- Great Amoskeag Dam and Power Station Threatened --- City Practically Isolated --- Industry at Standstill --- Daring Rescues Made --- Highways in All Sections Closed --- Water Supply, Power Cut Off in Several Towns, Cities

