



Understanding Primary Versus Secondary Sources

Type of Teacher Tool: Individual assignment, class-based research projects, contest research projects such as History Day and Science Fair or as a unit of inquiry-based learning.

Targeted Grade Level(s): 4-5, 6-8, 9-12

Targeted Curriculum Areas: Social Studies, History, Language Arts

Learning Objectives:

The learner will:

1. explore (insert your topic here) through videotaped interviews, photographs, letters, reports and other primary and secondary source documents.
2. investigate and evaluate both primary and secondary sources for their possible use in a research-based project, presentation, or written work.
3. create a bibliography that includes properly identified primary and secondary sources.

National/Common Core Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#)

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9](#)

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3](#)

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8](#)

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9](#)

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8](#)

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](#)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Resources Needed:

Video from Educate.Today website page where this Teacher Tool was found and any other related videos of your choice

Teacher Instructions:

1. Students watch the video(s).
2. As they watch, students select an idea, concept, interview or event from the video that interests them for further study.
3. After watching the video(s), guide the students to an understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources.
4. Have students re-watch the video(s) to determine if it is a primary source, secondary source, or includes examples of both types of sources. Have students take notes as needed.
5. Have students share examples of each type of source included in the video and discuss each other's examples.
6. Check the students' work from steps 4 and 5 to see if they understand the difference between a primary and secondary source and the value of using each in a research project.
7. Based on the idea, concept, topic, or event they chose in step 2, have students research for more information on that topic using Educate.Today video resources and any other resources you find appropriate for them to use.
8. After giving them a certain amount of research time to locate additional primary and secondary sources on their topic, have students create a bibliography of items found and organize them by primary source and secondary source.

Extension Assignment Options:

1. Students use research gained through step 7 to create a project, presentation, research essay, article, or short story that incorporates both primary and secondary sources they found in their research.

Assessment/Evaluation Options:

1. Teacher assessment of student discussions, questions and notes made throughout the lesson.
2. Evaluate student bibliographies.