Identifying and Analyzing Sources
Primary Sources

- Primary sources are actual records and artifacts that have survived from the past.
- First hand accounts from the actual participants or witnesses.
Examples

Autobiographies

A written account of a person’s life, written by the actual person

“I shot a man in Reno, just to watch him die”
Personal descriptions of daily life

So… if the tooth fairy were to ever write down her feelings about her day, it would be a primary source
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Family of Nations, the standing of a separate and independent State, they have a Right to alter their Situation, to contract new Bonds of Union, and to form a Government for their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence indeed, would desire an union so beneficial to them, to be effectuated with all possible deliberation and precaution.

With these Considerations, it is determined, by the unanimous Consent of the States present, the General Congress shall consist of Delegates from the several States appointed with their Assent and Consent, in the following Manner.

Each State shall have Two Senators, and a Number of Representatives according to its Numbers, in the Assembly of the State, from which they are chosen, one Representative for every thirty Thousand, or as near thereto as can be divided, every Senator and Representative shall be chosen for the Term of Two Years, and the Seats of the Senators and Representatives shall be vacated biennially.

When this Congress shall have proceeded as aforesaid, they shall appoint a Committee to devise such a Plan as shall appear to them most likely to effect their ends, and which shall be agreeable to the Principles and Principles set forth in the preceding Articles.

This Committee shall then present the said Plan to the Congress, and it shall, prior to the Ordinary of the next Session of Congress, be delivered to the Delegates of each State; and if the Legislatures of nine States shall agree thereto, the Articles of Confederation shall be revised and amended in such Manner as to effectuate the same.
Eyewitness Accounts

Remember, it must be a first hand account of what was seen
Interviews, speeches, and oral histories
Photographs
Art

Music
Artifacts
Can a copy be a primary source?
YES!!!

A copy can be considered a primary source, however it cannot be edited or interpreted in any way.

Example:

Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!” speech can be found in 100 Key Documents in American History
Secondary Sources

- Secondary sources are accounts of the past written by or spoken about people that were not there.
- Often use several primary sources to compile information.
Biographies

Accounts of a life written by someone else

Einstein

Walter Isaacson

Patton

Alan Axelrod

General Wesley K. Clark

Bowie

Marc Spitz
Let’s Practice!
Using your fingers, Choose if the item is
A- a primary source- 1 finger
Or
B- a secondary source 2 fingers
The unanimous Declaration of the United States of America.

In Congress, July 4, 1776.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

When a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing always the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such being the case, it is the duty of the present Congress to declare the Thirteen United Colonies Free and Independent States, that they may have Authority to do all Acts which may be necessary and proper in Cohesion with the United States for their own Defence and Welfare.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, do appeal to the浚 ith World for a judgment in Right. That the United States are Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to make and maintain War, Peace, and Alliances; to bind the publick Credit, and to raise and support Armies and Navies; to declare War against, consortium, and all Persons obliged to support them; on all Persons, publick and private, who shall at any time give aid and comfort to the Rebels, or helped against them, and the State of Great Britain; and that the United States, on their part, should subscribe to the Treaty, and241

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The original Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci
New Oxford Thesaurus of English on CD-ROM
Version 2.1
Single User Version
The World's Most Trusted Dictionaries

Thesaurus
Mein Kampf authored by Hitler concerning his political reflections and autobiography.
Time magazine article discussing how Obama may be the next President.
Original audio recording of Martin Luther King speech
Book about the role women played during WWII
Original WWII poster encouraging women to become involved in the war effort by taking jobs normally men would do.
Biographies
AIR TERMINAL PROPERTIES, Inc.
99 WALL STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.

December 10, 1932.

Mr. F. A. Armbroutt,
Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Dear Mr. Armbroutt:

The writer has volunteered to assist Colonel Chamberlin in answering some of the many letters he has received since sending out his bulletins.

The notations on your questionnaire have been read with interest. Colonel Chamberlin, we believe, has explained his position fully. We have no interest in the old Crescent Aircraft Corporation as no one connected with our organization had anything to do directly or indirectly with that Company.

We are, however, personally interested in Colonel Chamberlin personally and know that he is sincerely endeavoring to do what he feels to be the right thing to the extent of his ability, towards those who may have invested in the Crescent Company because of his name having been associated with the enterprise.

You have, no doubt, received this proposition, under separate cover. We would suggest that you write Colonel Chamberlin just exactly what you want to do — in other words, Colonel Chamberlin has submitted a certain proposition, which you may or may not be able to accept, but he is also willing to let you "write your own ticket".

Just advise him as to your wishes and what you can do.

Yours truly yours,

[Signature]

President

[Company Name]

An original letter written in 1932.
A reproduction of the famous painting, *American Gothic*, by Grant Wood
The iPhone
How do you analyze and evaluate Primary and secondary sources?
1. Author’s main point
2. Source’s point of view
3. Source’s purpose
4. Distinguish between fact and opinion
5. Are there other perspectives to consider
6. The source’s credibility and validity
But you must ensure your source’s Credibility and Validity!
How can you tell if the book, article, website, or other resource you located is a valid, credible source?

**Who?**
- Who is the author? What are his/her credentials?

**What?**
- What information is available from this resource?

**Where?**
- Where did the author(s) get the information? Are citations provided?

**When?**
- When was the resource produced? (For books, check the copyright date. For articles, check the publication date. For websites, look for a "created on" or "last updated on" date.)

**Why?**
- Why does this resource exist? Is the purpose to entertain, persuade, inform, etc.? Is the resource biased?

**How?**
- How comprehensive is the resource? Does it go into the depth you need?
For example....

• If you wanted to obtain information regarding the state of Iraq during the Iraqi War under Hussein, you wouldn’t want to watch the Iraqi new station, Al Jazeer.

• If you wanted to find out how many people have been killed in Darfur, you wouldn’t go to the Sudanese government under Bashir.

• If you wanted to research “global warming”, you wouldn’t use Wikipedia because ANYONE can edit or furnish information on it.

• Wikis and blogs are not usually credible or valid sources.
Let’s try a few with a partner

1. You want to find information on the number of Palestinian refugees in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Would you go to the Palestinian newspaper, Al Bawaba?

2. You want to find out what Hitler said in a speech. Do you use the Hitler Historical Museum for original recordings?

3. You want to find out if Angelina Jolie and Jennifer Aniston had a cat fight at the Oscars. Would you read the Star.

4. You want to find out how people viewed the Civil War in 1862. Would you read a
2 Rules when Evaluating sources...

Rule 1: Time and Place Rule-

The closer in time and place a source and its creator were to an event in the past, the better the source will be. Based on this rule, better primary sources (starting with the most reliable) might include:

• Direct traces of the event.
  • Accounts of the event, created after the event occurred, by firsthand observers and participants.
  • Accounts of the event, created after the event occurred, by people who did not participate or witness the event, but who used interviews or evidence from the time of the event.
Rule 2: Bias Rule-

Every source is biased in some way. Documents tell us only what the creator of the document thought happened, or perhaps what the creator wants us to think happened. As a result:

Every piece of evidence and every source must be read or viewed skeptically and critically.

No piece of evidence should be taken at face value. The creator's point of view must be considered.

Each piece of evidence and source must be cross-checked and compared with related sources and pieces of evidence.
"The following day we heard rumors that Hutus were out to kill every Tutsi in the country, claiming that we, the Tutsis had killed the Hutu president. We were advised to stay indoors. I had never seen my parents so agitated and terrified all my life."

"Then there was a knock at the door and before we could even respond, the door fell in and about four or so people came in and dragged my father out by his legs. That was the last we saw of him."

"We were hiding under the bed but we could see everything. Mother told us to keep quiet. Then the shooting began."

"The bullets came in and hit everything in the way. Yet no-one dared scream. Mother could not cover all four of us."
Let’s try another...
Let’s Review!
Questions

• How do primary and secondary sources shape our view of history?
• Is there a such thing as unbiased primary and secondary sources?
• Do all primary and secondary sources reflect an authentic view of an event which in turn, reflects authentic history?
• Why is it important to have primary and secondary sources?