An Introduction to Primary and Secondary Sources
What are primary sources?

A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time under study. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event.
Examples:

**Original Documents** (excerpts or translations acceptable): 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:

Books, magazines, newspapers
Examples of primary sources:

Diaries, journals, records

Personal Records
Examples of primary sources:

- **Visual Materials**
- Paintings, drawings, sculpture
Examples of primary sources:

Visual Materials

photographs, film, maps
Examples of primary sources:

Oral Histories

Chronicles, memoirs, myths, legends passed down by word of mouth
Examples of primary sources:

Songs and Poems
Examples of primary sources:

Artifacts

Tools, ornaments, objects
What are secondary sources?

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.
Examples:

- **Publications** such as:
  - Textbooks
  - Magazine articles
  - Histories
  - Criticisms
  - Commentaries
  - Encyclopedias
Examples of secondary sources:

Textbooks, biographies, histories, newspaper report by someone who was not present
Examples of secondary sources:

Charts, graphs, or images created AFTER the time period.
Using GOOGLE for primary sources

To find primary documents on the web, try the following internet search:

"topic + “primary source”"