

Clues From 1906

Compare sources to investigate a past event.

SS.4.A.1 "Historical Inquiry and Analysis"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that tell when a source was made. Circle words that explain what the source can or cannot show.

Finding Evidence After an Earthquake

- ① In 1906, a powerful earthquake struck San Francisco, California. Fires then burned for several days and destroyed much of the city. A fourth-grade class asks, "How did children experience the disaster?" To investigate, the class looks for sources made at the time and sources created later. Each source can offer evidence, but each may also leave out details.
- ② One source is a newspaper article printed in San Francisco on April 20, 1906. It reports that families camped in parks after the earthquake and fires. Because the article was printed during the event, it is a primary source. However, the reporter may have seen only some neighborhoods. The class should compare it with other evidence before deciding what happened across the city.
- ③ A history book published in 2005 explains that relief camps provided food, water, and tents. It says about 250,000 people were left homeless. This is a secondary source because its author studied earlier records. The book gives a broad view, while the newspaper gives a close view from one time and place. Together, the sources help the class build a stronger answer.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Which source is a primary source? What detail proves it?

2 Why is the history book a secondary source?

3 What is one limit of the newspaper article as evidence?

4 How can using both sources help the class answer its question about the disaster?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a question about your school or community in the past. Write exactly three sentences: name a primary source, name a secondary source, and explain why you would compare both sources.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that tell when a source was made. Circle words that explain what the source can or cannot show. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which source is a primary source? What detail proves it?	The San Francisco newspaper article is a primary source because it was printed on April 20, 1906, during the disaster.
2	Why is the history book a secondary source?	It is a secondary source because it was published in 2005 and its author studied earlier records.
3	What is one limit of the newspaper article as evidence?	The reporter may have seen only some neighborhoods, so the article may not show what happened across the whole city.
4	How can using both sources help the class answer its question about the disaster?	The newspaper gives a close view from the time of the event, and the history book gives a broader view based on earlier records. Comparing them can build a stronger answer.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is, "What games did students play at Lincoln School in 1960?" A 1960 school newspaper is a primary source, and a book about the school's history is a secondary source. I would compare them because the newspaper may show games from one day, while the book may use records from many years.

Accept answers that correctly use the source date and how the author got information to distinguish primary and secondary sources. For the open response, accept any reasonable historical question and source pair if the student explains why comparing sources is useful.