Source Trail

Identify source types and build MLA citations from reliable details.

8.R.1.F "Cite primary and secondary sources using the Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA) style."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each source title, circle the author or group author connected to it, and write P or S beside it. Box the parenthetical citation that connects a claim to a source.

Following Apollo 11 Sources

1. When writers explain a historical event, they can use primary and secondary sources. A primary source comes from the time or person being studied, such as a diary, photograph, speech, or recorded interview. A secondary source interprets or explains evidence after the event. In MLA style, a writer names an author in the sentence or uses the author's last name in parentheses. A matching entry in Works Cited gives readers enough information to locate the source.

2. During Apollo 11's July 1969 moonwalk, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin spoke while exploring the lunar surface. A transcript of those communications is a primary source because it records words from the mission itself. In an MLA research paragraph, a writer might write, Aldrin described the scene as "magnificent desolation" (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The parenthetical citation points to the group author of the transcript, not to the astronaut who spoke those words.

3. A secondary source can add context to the transcript. Andrew Chaikin's book *A Man on the Moon* explains Apollo missions by using interviews and records written later. Its MLA entry begins with Chaikin's name: Chaikin, Andrew. *A Man on the Moon: The Voyages of the Apollo Astronauts*. Penguin Books, 2007. The primary transcript's entry begins with its group author: National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Apollo 11 Lunar Surface Journal." NASA History Office, https://www.hq.nasa.gov/alsj/a11/a11.html. Accessed 15 Aug. 2026.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which source in paragraph 2 is a primary source? Give two details from the passage that support your answer.

2. Copy the parenthetical MLA citation in paragraph 2. What kind of author does it name?

3. A classmate starts the Works Cited entry for Chaikin's book with the book title. What should come first instead, and why?

4. Write the parenthetical MLA citation you would use for a quotation from Chaikin's book, based on the rule in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Use these source details to make two MLA Works Cited entries, one primary and one secondary. Label each entry P or S: Frederick Douglass's speech "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?", delivered 5 July 1852 at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York, and David W. Blight's 2018 book *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, published by Simon & Schuster.

ANSWER KEY # Source Trail

GRADE 8 · 8.R.1.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each source title, circle the author or group author connected to it, and write P or S beside it. Box the parenthetical citation that connects a claim to a source. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which source in paragraph 2 is a primary source? Give two details from the passage that support your answer.	**The transcript of Apollo 11 communications. It records words from the mission itself, and Aldrin spoke those words during the 1969 moonwalk.**
2	Copy the parenthetical MLA citation in paragraph 2. What kind of author does it name?	**(National Aeronautics and Space Administration). It names a group author.**
3	A classmate starts the Works Cited entry for Chaikin's book with the book title. What should come first instead, and why?	**Chaikin, Andrew, should come first because the MLA entry begins with the author's name.**
4	Write the parenthetical MLA citation you would use for a quotation from Chaikin's book, based on the rule in the passage.	**(Chaikin)**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

S: Blight, David W. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*. Simon & Schuster, 2018.

P: Douglass, Frederick. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Speech, 5 July 1852, Corinthian Hall, Rochester, NY.

Accept equivalent MLA punctuation and formatting if each entry includes the needed author, title, publisher or speech details, and date. Students should identify Douglass's speech as primary and Blight's later biography as secondary.