Source Time Machine

Sort sources by how they connect to an event or topic.

8.R.1 "Evaluation and Synthesis of Information Formulate and revise questions about a research topic, broadening or narrowing the inquiry as necessary. Collect, organize..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

PRIMARY SOURCE

A primary source provides original or firsthand evidence for a research question. Many records come from the event itself, but a later firsthand recollection can also be primary. Recording time helps you judge context and reliability; it does not decide the category by itself.

An official transcript from a 1970 city council meeting.

SECONDARY SOURCE

A secondary source explains, analyzes, or interprets information from primary sources. It is created after someone studies the topic.

A book that interprets the rise of jazz music.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle PRIMARY or SECONDARY for each source, then for Part 2, choose two items and explain what makes each source primary or secondary.

1.	A diary a nurse wrote during the 1918 flu pandemic	PRIMARY SECONDARY
2.	An audio recording of an eyewitness describing a 1963 march	PRIMARY SECONDARY
3.	A textbook chapter explaining the causes of World War I	PRIMARY SECONDARY
4.	A photograph taken at a 1930s construction site	PRIMARY SECONDARY
5.	A biography recounting Ada Lovelace's life	PRIMARY SECONDARY
6.	A museum website article summarizing ancient Egyptian farming	PRIMARY SECONDARY
7.	A chart listing daily rainfall measured by a city weather station	PRIMARY SECONDARY
8.	A podcast episode analyzing a Supreme Court decision	PRIMARY SECONDARY

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new PRIMARY source example and one new SECONDARY source example about any topic.

PRIMARY _____

SECONDARY _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one primary source you wrote and name a secondary source that could help you study the same topic, then explain why it is secondary.

ANSWER KEY

Source Time Machine

GRADE 8 · 8.R.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A diary a nurse wrote during the 1918 flu pandemic	**PRIMARY**	It is a firsthand record written during the event.
2	An audio recording of an eyewitness describing a 1963 march	**PRIMARY**	It preserves a firsthand account from someone who was there.
3	A textbook chapter explaining the causes of World War I	**SECONDARY**	It explains and interprets past events using research.
4	A photograph taken at a 1930s construction site	**PRIMARY**	It is an original image created at the time.
5	A biography recounting Ada Lovelace's life	**SECONDARY**	It tells and interprets information about her life after the fact.
6	A museum website article summarizing ancient Egyptian farming	**SECONDARY**	It summarizes information about a historical topic.
7	A chart listing daily rainfall measured by a city weather station	**PRIMARY**	It is original data recorded as measurements were taken.
8	A podcast episode analyzing a Supreme Court decision	**SECONDARY**	It analyzes a source or event rather than serving as the original record.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **PRIMARY**: A video filmed during a city parade in 2005.
- **SECONDARY**: A history book explaining why the Berlin Wall fell.

Challenge: For the video of a city parade, I could use a book about the parade's history. The book is secondary because its author explains information about the event after studying sources.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Accept equivalent examples when the student correctly identifies whether the source is an original record or an interpretation. For Part 2, look for an explanation that connects the source's creation and purpose to its category. A later eyewitness interview may be primary evidence even when memory needs checking. Classify by how the source relates to the research question, and discuss recording time as context rather than a mandatory cutoff.