

Trust the Source

Examine evidence before you rely on it.

5.23.B "identify and ask questions about the credibility of different kinds of primary and secondary sources;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each source named in the passage. Circle details that help you judge a source's credibility, including its author, date, evidence, or missing information.

Sources From an Earthquake

- ① In 1906, a powerful earthquake and fires damaged San Francisco. To learn what happened, historians use sources made at the time, called primary sources, and sources created later, called secondary sources. A survivor's letter, a newspaper printed that week, and a photograph taken after the quake can be primary sources. Each gives evidence, but each may show only part of the event.
- ② An archive keeps a letter from a survivor that describes sleeping outdoors after the earthquake. Its date and author help readers trace where the information came from. Still, historians should ask whether the writer saw every event personally and why the writer made the letter. The memories are useful firsthand evidence, but they cannot tell the whole city's story.
- ③ A history book published in 2020 is a secondary source if its author used earlier records to explain the disaster. Check who wrote the book, when it was published, and whether it names evidence. A website with dramatic claims but no author or sources deserves extra questions. Comparing a letter, a photograph, and a well-supported book can help historians check details.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Is the survivor's letter a primary or secondary source? Use information from the passage to explain your answer.

2 What are two questions historians should ask about the survivor's letter before relying on it?

3 Name two details you should check to judge whether the 2020 history book is credible.

4 A website makes dramatic claims about the earthquake but gives no author or sources. Write two credibility questions you could ask about the website.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Suppose you find a social media post about an event in your town. In three sentences, identify it as a primary or secondary source and write two questions you would ask before trusting it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each source named in the passage. Circle details that help you judge a source's credibility, including its author, date, evidence, or missing information. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Is the survivor's letter a primary or secondary source? Use information from the passage to explain your answer.	It is a primary source because it was made by a survivor about the earthquake at the time of the event.
2	What are two questions historians should ask about the survivor's letter before relying on it?	Did the writer personally see every event? Why did the writer make the letter?
3	Name two details you should check to judge whether the 2020 history book is credible.	Check who wrote the book and whether it names evidence. Accept checking when it was published as another detail.
4	A website makes dramatic claims about the earthquake but gives no author or sources. Write two credibility questions you could ask about the website.	Who wrote the website? What sources or evidence support its claims?

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A post made during the town parade by someone who watched it is a primary source. Who wrote the post, and did that person see the parade? When was it posted, and does it include a photo or other evidence?

Accept equivalent credibility questions about the creator, date, purpose, firsthand knowledge, evidence, or supporting sources. For the open response, accept either source type when the student's explanation fits the source described.