

Source Sleuth Sort

Sort sources, explain two choices, and create your own.

5.23 "Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology. The student is expected to: differentiate between, locate..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

PRIMARY SOURCE

A primary source was created during the time of an event or by someone who experienced it. It gives direct evidence from that time.

A postcard sent from Chicago during the 1893 World's Fair.

SECONDARY SOURCE

A secondary source was created later to explain, describe, or study the past. It uses information from primary sources and other research.

A recent article explaining how the Interstate Highway System changed travel.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Read each source and circle PRIMARY or SECONDARY.

1. A 1776 letter written by a Continental Army soldier.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

2. A 2020 documentary explaining the causes of the Civil War.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

3. A recording made in 1938 of a person describing life during the Great Depression.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

4. A newspaper article printed the day after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

5. A historian's website article posted in 2022 about the Trail of Tears.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

6. A map drawn in 1804 by a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

7. A biography published in 2019 about Harriet Tubman.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

8. A speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963.

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 and one new SECONDARY source about United States history.

PRIMARY _____

SECONDARY _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one source you wrote and add one question that would help you check whether it is trustworthy.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A 1776 letter written by a Continental Army soldier.	PRIMARY	The soldier wrote the letter during the Revolutionary War.
2	A 2020 documentary explaining the causes of the Civil War.	SECONDARY	The documentary was made long after the Civil War to explain it.
3	A recording made in 1938 of a person describing life during the Great Depression.	PRIMARY	The recording was made during the Great Depression by someone describing that time.
4	A newspaper article printed the day after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.	PRIMARY	The article was printed at the time of the event.
5	A historian's website article posted in 2022 about the Trail of Tears.	SECONDARY	The historian wrote later to explain a past event.
6	A map drawn in 1804 by a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition.	PRIMARY	A person on the expedition created the map during the expedition.
7	A biography published in 2019 about Harriet Tubman.	SECONDARY	The biography was written later to tell about Tubman's life.
8	A speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963.	PRIMARY	King gave the speech during the historical time being studied.

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 ticket stub from a 1969 Apollo 11 launch event.
- **SECONDARY:** A museum article explaining the history of the Apollo program.

Challenge: Who created the ticket stub, and can I confirm that it was used at the 1969 launch?

Sort answers: 1 PRIMARY, 2 SECONDARY, 3 PRIMARY, 4 PRIMARY, 5 SECONDARY, 6 PRIMARY, 7 SECONDARY, 8 PRIMARY. For the two explanations, check that students name when the source was created and whether it gives direct evidence or later explanation.