

White House Central Files  
Confidential Files

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

*B.F.  
War*

*25  
file*

April 24, 1945.

*Saw  
4-25-45*

Dear Mr. President:

I think it is very important that I should

# PRIMARY SOURCE

office but have not urged it since on account of the  
pressure you have been under. It, however, has such a  
bearing on our important effect that  
I think you ought to know about it without further  
delay.

# PRIMER

*x386*

Faithfully yours,

*Henry L. Stimson*

Secretary of War. *x25*



The President,  
The White House.

*Ho H*  
*Paton list  
tomorrow, Wed. 25,  
H.H.*

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 3(F) or (3)

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By NLT, NARS Date 2-2-76

SECRET



# WHAT'S A PRIMARY SOURCE?

A primary source is a first-hand account of a topic from people who had a direct connection with it.

Videos, diaries, oral histories, census data, photographs, newspaper articles, and artifacts can all be (but aren't always) examples of primary sources.

## What's a secondary source?

A secondary source interprets or analyzes a historical event or period after the event has occurred.

Books on the topic, scholarly articles, and documentaries can all be (but aren't always) examples of secondary sources.

## When is a primary source a secondary source (and vice versa)?

Whether something is a primary source or a secondary source often depends on its use.

If you pick up an American history textbook to learn about the Civil War, the textbook would be a secondary source, since it interprets history.

But that same American history textbook would be a primary source if you were using it to research the history of textbooks, history education, or changes in how the Civil War has been portrayed over time.

# SCAVENGER HUNT

Check off and name the objects as you find them.

- Detects radiation: \_\_\_\_\_
- Addressed to Mr. Robert Hartmann: \_\_\_\_\_
- Shot into space in the 1960s to test the heat shield:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Radium Water Worked Fine Until His Jaw Came Off: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fused desert sand: \_\_\_\_\_
- Led to the discovery of iodine-131 and tin-113:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Obtained through milling and chemical processing of uranium ore: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contains a 72 hour emergency food supply for a family of 6: \_\_\_\_\_

# FIND A PRIMARY SOURCE THAT IS AN OBJECT.

1

Look at the object first *without* reading any nearby labels.

What do you notice first? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the object's physical features while considering the following questions: What is it made of? Why was this material chosen? What is the texture and color? Can it be held? Is it heavy or light? Is it intact, or does it look like parts are missing? Is it clean or dirty? Does it make a noise? Does it look old or new?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What might the object have been used for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What questions do you have about this object that you can't answer just by looking at it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2

Read the labels around your object. They may help answer the questions, but you may still have to make some inferences.

Where was this object made? Who made it? How? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How is this object used? Does it have a practical use or is (was) it used for pleasure? Has it been used? Is it still in use? Has the use changed? Where can it be found? Where could it have been found?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can you infer about the life and times of the people who made and used it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3

Reflect on the object.

What value does this object hold for you? For others?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Should it be in a museum collection? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you find out from this artifact that you might not learn anywhere else? What other historical evidence could help you understand the event or time in which this artifact was used?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# FIND A PRIMARY SOURCE THAT IS A PHOTO.

What do you notice first?

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Examine the whole photograph closely. What's happening in the photograph?

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Where is it from? \_\_\_\_\_

When is it from? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you think took the picture? Why?

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Why do you think this photo was taken?

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What did you find out from this photo that you might not learn anywhere else?

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# FIND A PRIMARY SOURCE THAT IS A POSTER.

What do you notice first?

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Does it have a message printed on it? Are there questions or instructions? Does it say who created it?

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List the people, objects, places, and activities in the poster. What are the main colors used? Are there any symbols?

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Who is the intended audience? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was it created? What did the creator of the poster want the audience to do or feel? List evidence from the poster that supports your answers.

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What other documents or historical evidence could you use to help you understand this event or topic?

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