

# WHAT ARE PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES?

Know the difference!

## PRIMARY

A primary source is a piece of information created by **someone who was actually there to witness it.**

Primary sources capture the words, thoughts and the intentions of the past by people who were there.

### What are they?

Letters, speeches, photographs, documents, artifacts, historic locations, songs, or other written and tangible items created during the historical period you are studying.

### For Example:

The letter from Abraham Lincoln to George Robertson about slavery.

## SECONDARY

A secondary source is **not created first-hand** by someone who was there.

Secondary sources are usually created by historians, but based on the historian's reading of primary sources.

### What are they?

Essays, books written about a period of time, documentaries about people or ideas, textbooks, opinions and criticism about an issue.

### For Example:

A textbook that describes the letter Abraham Lincoln sent to George Robertson.

My dear Sir  
of your letter of Tuesday it is  
to me in mind of my poor old  
re you got a great shock w  
bout poor Fannie. well she is  
but her heart is weak so the  
thats she will not be home  
and the board of health  
married for another 12 months  
have to postpone the wedding  
thats. But you ought to be there  
on so well for she was never  
in the Valley there is fire  
it from here now. Yours  
inches of yesterday but the



### References

Don't forget to cite your sources in your bibliography!