Exploring Primary Source Materials: The Library of Congress

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Information Literacy Textbooks Used

Missouri Library Conference 2017
Primary vs. Secondary Sources
The Emancipation Proclamation

Draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, by President Abraham Lincoln, July 22, 1862. The Robert Todd Lincoln Family Papers, Manuscript Division from the American Memory Collection

https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/aimss/dep001.html


Image provided by University of Vermont


Missouri Library Conference 2017
Seeing examples of primary source materials -- the Emancipation Proclamation, for example -- helps students understand what they are and why they are important.
Definition: Primary sources

Items created, written or recorded by a direct participant in an event are primary source materials.

You'll find lots of those at the Library of Congress site.
# Primary vs. Secondary Sources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Source</strong></td>
<td>Original, first-hand account of an event or time period</td>
<td>Report of scientific discoveries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually written or made during or close to the event or time period</td>
<td>Results of experiments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Original, creative writing or works of art</td>
<td>Results of clinical trials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Factual, not interpretive</td>
<td>Social and political science research results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Source</strong></td>
<td>Analyzes and interprets primary sources</td>
<td>Analyzes and interprets research results</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second-hand account of an historical event</td>
<td>Analyzes and interprets scientific discoveries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interprets creative work</td>
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## Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Published results of research studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaries, journals, and letters</td>
<td>Published results of scientific experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper and magazine articles (factual accounts)</td>
<td>Published results of clinical trials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government records (census, marriage, military)</td>
<td>Proceedings of conferences and meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographs, maps, postcards, posters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Publications about the significance of research or experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies</td>
<td>Analysis of a clinical trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histories</td>
<td>Review of the results of several experiments or trials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literary Criticism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book, Art, and Theater Reviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles that interpret</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Complete the following tasks:

1. View 3 minute video “Meet the Librarian of Congress.”
3. Next, go to Library of Congress website (www.loc.gov)
4. Explore the site (spend at least 10 minutes)
5. Click on "Write a comment" and respond to the discussion questions.
Guided Questions for the Assignment

Your comments should include:

• What information about Dr. Carla Hayden or the Library of Congress did you most enjoy learning about in the videos?
• What did you find interesting in your virtual visit to the Library of Congress?
• Explain why it was interesting.
• Provide the link (URL) of the web page so others can find it.
What did you learn about primary sources at the Library of Congress from the videos?
Visit https://www.loc.gov
I visited the Library of Congress website on Monday, September 11th, 2017. Featured on the homepage was a link to a documentary project collection dedicated to September 11th, 2001. What I found interesting in this collection was that it contained drawings from children, photographs displaying community responses to the attacks, and interviews from people who witnessed the attacks firsthand. I listened to a few minutes of an interview by Lillie Haws, and it is bone-chilling to go back sixteen years and relive the attacks on the World Trade Center. I really loved that this collection included personal interviews because it provides a raw insight to what people experienced on the day that ultimately changed the United States forever.
I found the complete works of Abraham Lincoln’s papers at the Library of Congress. [T]hey have...all his speeches, notes, and anything he wrote down. I found this interesting because I love history and really like Abraham Lincoln...Some of the papers ...they have include a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, draft of his second Inaugural Address ...[T]o see those papers he wrote in real life would be amazing. It is like breathing in history when you are that close.
The information about Dr. Carla Hayden that I found most interesting in the videos was that during the time of unrest in Baltimore, Maryland, she kept the library open as a place of refuge for the public as a way to show her support to the community. I especially enjoyed her remark about creating an environment of inclusion for all people, because it shows her dedication to the public. In the video from Today about the Library of Congress, it was interesting to see that they have a conservation room and non-textual artifacts, both of which are things that I expected out of a museum but had never considered to exist inside of a library.
Most impressive to me was the amount of information available. The module about the Library of Congress alone was worth the price of admission for this course. I can now say, I access that website and information almost weekly. Being a history buff, it has become my "go to" source of historical information and data.


Wilson, G., (2014) *100% Information Literacy Success*. 3rd Ed., Stamford


Meet the Librarian of Congress, video: [https://www.youtube.com/embed/RnlZjccjNqE?rel=0&modestbranding=1&showinfo=0&enablejsapi=1](https://www.youtube.com/embed/RnlZjccjNqE?rel=0&modestbranding=1&showinfo=0&enablejsapi=1)


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