

Primary and Secondary Sources

The Chennault Aviation & Military Museum
701 Kansas Lane
Monroe, LA 71203
(318) 362-5540

www.chennaultmuseum.org



Primary and Secondary Sources

Objective: Using critical thinking and observation skills as well as prior knowledge, students will gain familiarity or reinforce knowledge of primary and secondary sources.

Grade Level: 4 – 7

Standards: 4.1.6 Define and distinguish between primary and secondary sources
4.1.7 Summarize primary resources and explain their historical importance
6.1.3 Analyze information in primary and secondary sources to address document-based questions
7.1.5 Analyze primary and secondary sources to answer questions related to United States history

Time Requirement: 60 minutes

Directions: Print out the PDF of the lesson and give each student a copy of the activity. Read the definitions of primary and secondary sources to your students. Once students feel comfortable with the concepts of the two sources show them the following sources they will be working with and review what their objective is. Students can work individually or in groups.

Assessment: Students can be assessed on their understanding of primary and secondary sources by conducting a discussion after the activity or they can be quizzed on their understanding following the activity.

Enrichment: Students can research and find a primary and or secondary source on their own. The student can bring in the primary or secondary source and explain their source to the class.

Read the following definitions of primary and secondary sources:

Primary Sources

A primary source provides direct or firsthand evidence about an event, object, person, or work of art. Primary sources include historical and legal documents, eyewitness accounts, results of experiments, statistical data, pieces of creative writing, audio and video recordings, speeches, and art objects. Interviews, surveys, fieldwork, and Internet communications via email, blogs, listservs, and newsgroups are also primary sources. In the natural and social sciences, primary sources are often empirical studies—research where an experiment was performed or a direct observation was made. The results of empirical studies are typically found in scholarly articles or papers delivered at conferences.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources describe, discuss, interpret, comment upon, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and process primary sources. Secondary source materials can be articles in newspapers or popular magazines, book or movie reviews, or articles found in scholarly journals that discuss or evaluate someone else's original research.

Using the primary and secondary sources provided answer the following questions:

1. Is the first source a primary or secondary source?

_____.

2. What are three clues that tell you the first source is a primary or secondary source?

3. Is the second source a primary or secondary source?

_____.

4. What are three clues that tell you the second source is a primary or secondary source?

5. Why are primary sources important in learning about history?

