

# Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Objective: Students will be able to identify primary and secondary sources.

# Primary Sources

- Primary sources are the original sources of information recorded at the time an event occurred.
  - First-hand accounts of events
  - Data collected for scientific studies
  - Historical documents

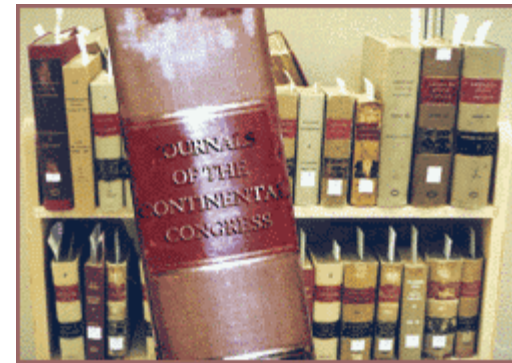
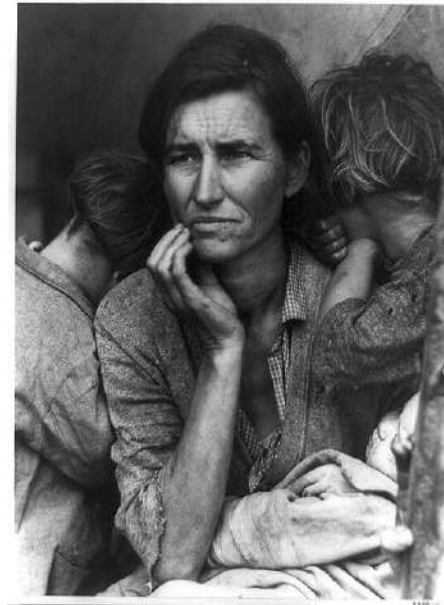


Image found at:  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwjc.html>

# Primary Sources

- Primary sources can also be written well after events.
  - memoirs
  - oral histories



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs  
Division Washington, DC 20540  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

# Why use primary sources?

- To explain how major events are related to each other in time.
- To think critically and distinguish between fact and opinion.
- To recognize point of view in print and visual materials.

# Why use primary sources?

- To develop your own conclusions and analyze how historical events affect your life.
- To recognize failures and successes in the past in order to make better decisions as a citizen.
- To understand who you are by examining your roots or placing yourself in that time period or situation.

# Primary Source Examples

- Diaries
- Poetry
- Personal Interviews
- Government Documents
- Autobiographies
- Peer-reviewed Journal Articles
- Photographs
- Artifacts/Ephemera

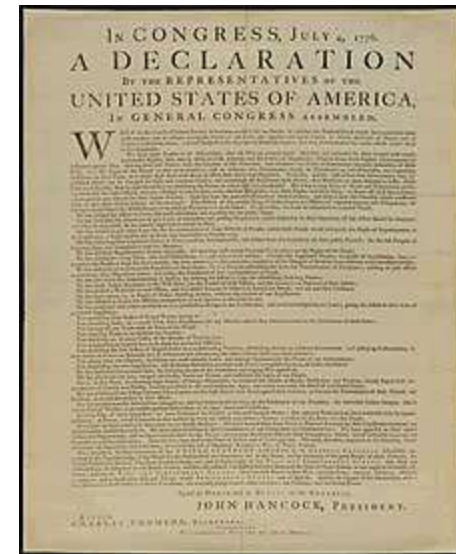


Image taken from:  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/DeclarInd.html>



Image taken from:  
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/cychas.jpg>



Image taken from: <http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/ppprs/00200/00200v.jpg>

Examples of Primary Sources:  
 Baseball Cards  
 Photos  
 Editorial Cartoons

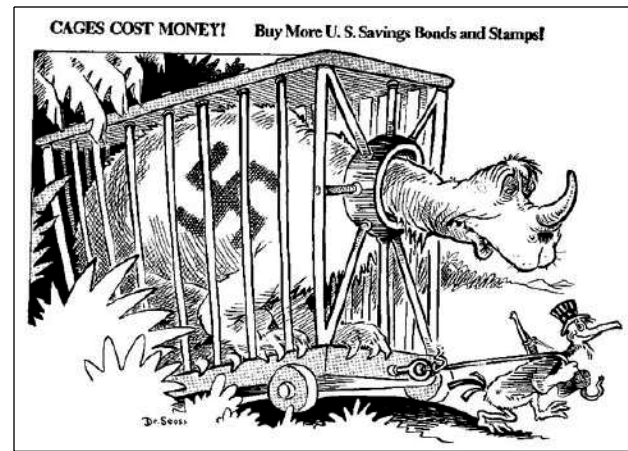


Image taken from:  
<http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/Frame.htm>

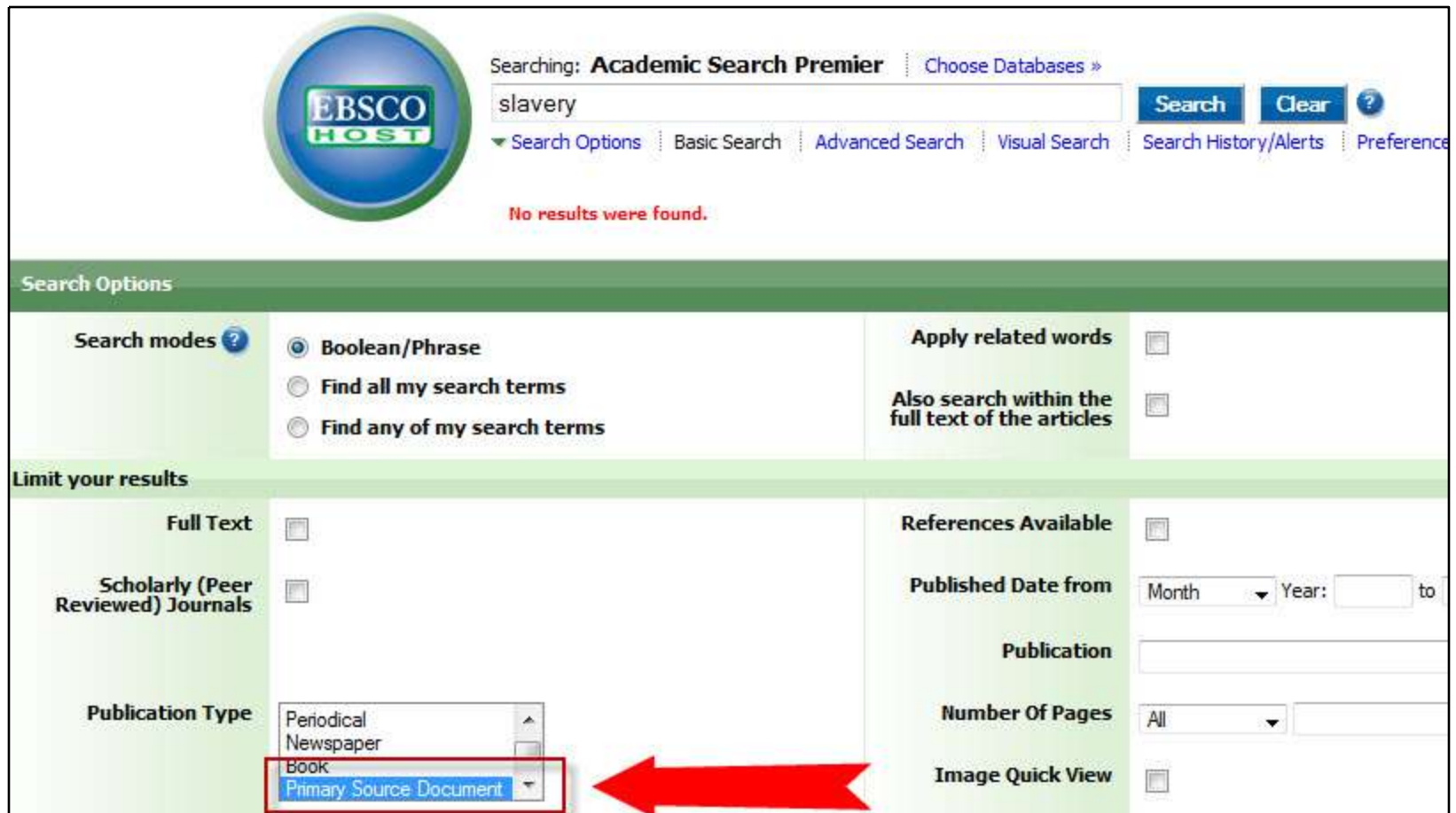
# Finding Primary Sources

- Use the library catalog
- Ask your librarian
- Search article databases and limit to primary sources or peer-reviewed
- Search Google Books



# Finding Primary Sources

Some databases will let you limit to Primary Sources.



The screenshot shows the EBSCO Academic Search Premier search results page. The search term "slavery" has been entered, and the results are empty, displaying the message "No results were found." The interface includes a search bar, a search button, and a clear button. Below the search bar, there are links for "Search Options", "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", "Search History/Alerts", and "Preference".

The "Search Options" section is expanded, showing the following settings:

- Search modes:**
  - ☒ Boolean/Phrase
  - ☐ Find all my search terms
  - ☐ Find any of my search terms
- Apply related words:** ☐
- Also search within the full text of the articles:** ☐

The "Limit your results" section is also expanded, showing the following filters:

- Full Text:** ☐
- Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals:** ☐
- Publication Type:**
  - Periodical
  - Newspaper
  - Book
  - Primary Source Document** (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow pointing to it)
- References Available:** ☐
- Published Date from:** Month:  Year:  to:
- Publication:**
- Number Of Pages:** All
- Image Quick View:** ☐

# Letter written by Thomas Jefferson to John Holmes

Title: *A firebell in the night*. By: Jefferson, Thomas, Firebell in the Night, 2009

Database: Academic Search Premier

## A firebell in the night

To John Holmes, Monticello, April 22, 1820

I thank you, dear Sir, for the copy you have been so kind as to send me of the letter to your constituents on the Missouri question. It is a perfect justification to them. I had for a longtime ceased to read newspapers, or pay any attention to public affairs, confident they were in good hands, and content to be a passenger in our bark to the shore from which I am not distant. But this momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper. I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relive us from this heavy reproach, in any practicable way. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and expatriation could be effected; and gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other. Of one thing I am certain, that as the passage of slaves from one State to another, would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it, so their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier, and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation, by dividing the burthen on a greater number of coadjutors. An abstinence too, from this act of power, would remove the jealousy excited by the undertaking of Congress to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a State. This certainly is the exclusive right of every State, which nothing in the constitution has taken from them and given to the General Government. Could Congress, for example, say, that the non-freemen of Connecticut shall be freemen, or that they shall not emigrate into any other State?

I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that I live not to weep over it. If they would but dispassionately weigh the blessings they will throw away, against an abstract principle more likely to be effected by union than by scission, they would pause before they would perpetrate this act of suicide on themselves, and of treason against the hopes of the world. To yourself, as the faithful advocate of the Union, I tender the offering of my high esteem and respect.

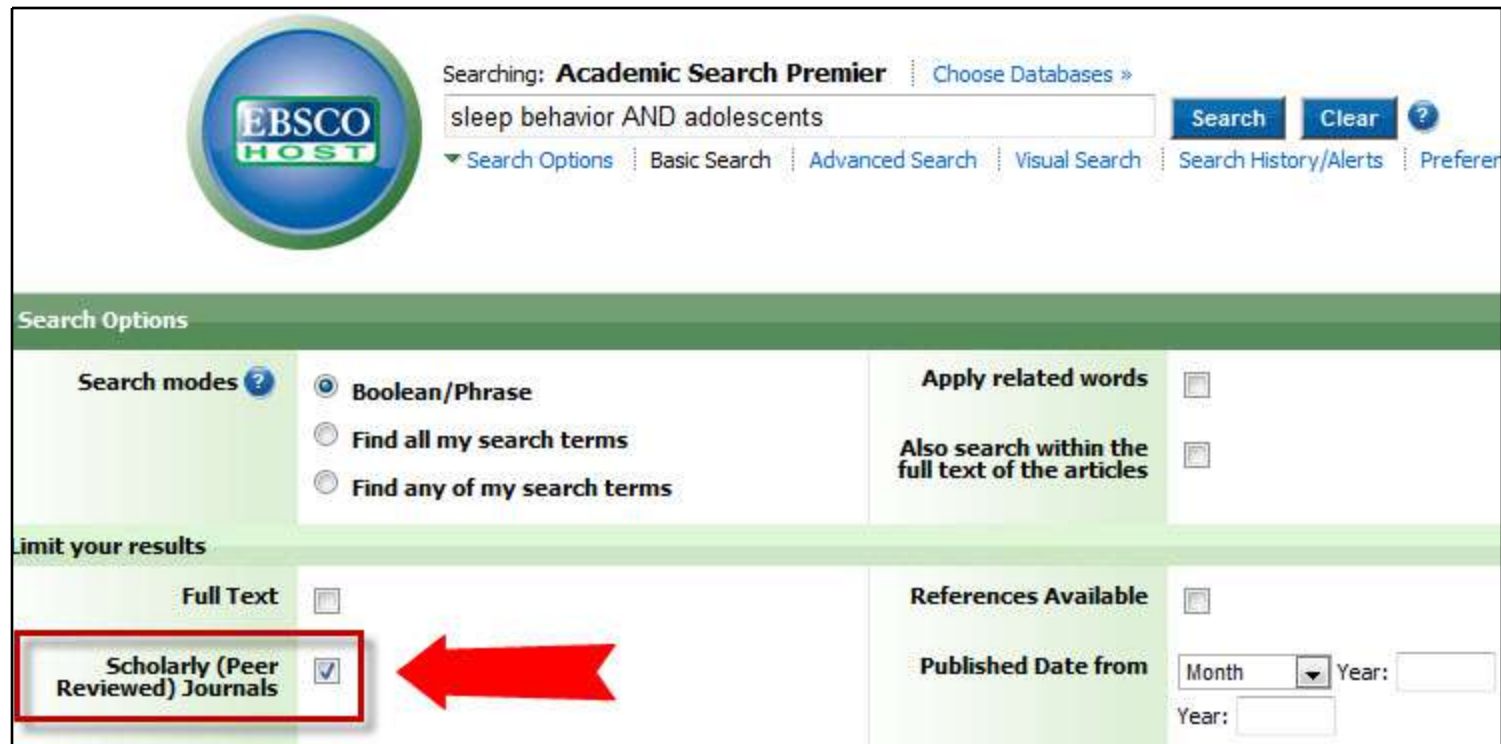
The Essential Documents of American History was compiled by Norman P. Desmarais and James H. McGovern of Providence College.

[Also Missouri Compromise -- The Taylor Amendment](#)

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By Thomas Jefferson

Many peer-reviewed journal articles are also considered primary sources because their authors collected data, analyzed it, and wrote up their original results in a paper. Many databases let you limit your search to peer-reviewed or scholarly articles.



The screenshot shows the EBSCO Academic Search Premier interface. At the top, the search query is "sleep behavior AND adolescents". Below the search bar, there are links for "Search Options", "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", "Search History/Alerts", and "Preferences". The "Search Options" section is expanded, showing three search modes: "Boolean/Phrase" (selected), "Find all my search terms", and "Find any of my search terms". There are also checkboxes for "Apply related words" and "Also search within the full text of the articles". The "Limit your results" section is also expanded, showing checkboxes for "Full Text", "References Available", and "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals". The "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals" checkbox is checked and highlighted with a red box and a red arrow. The "Published Date from" section shows a date range selector.

Searching: **Academic Search Premier** | [Choose Databases »](#)

sleep behavior AND adolescents **Search** **Clear** **?**

▼ [Search Options](#) | [Basic Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [Visual Search](#) | [Search History/Alerts](#) | [Preferences](#)

**Search Options**

**Search modes** **?**

- ☒ Boolean/Phrase
- ☐ Find all my search terms
- ☐ Find any of my search terms

**Apply related words** ☐

**Also search within the full text of the articles** ☐

**Limit your results**

**Full Text** ☐

**References Available** ☐

**Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals** ☒ ←

**Published Date from** Month:  Year:

# Peer Reviewed Journal Article

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Title:</b>         | <i>Adolescents' Sleep Behaviors and Perceptions of Sleep.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                   |
| <b>Authors:</b>       | <a href="#">Noland, Heather<sup>1</sup></a><br><a href="mailto:nolandheather@yahoo.com">nolandheather@yahoo.com</a><br><a href="#">Price, James H.<sup>2</sup></a><br><a href="mailto:jprice@utnet.utoledo.edu">jprice@utnet.utoledo.edu</a><br><a href="#">Dake, Joseph<sup>3</sup></a><br><a href="mailto:jdake@utnet.utoledo.edu">jdake@utnet.utoledo.edu</a><br><a href="#">Telljohann, Susan K.<sup>2</sup></a><br><a href="mailto:stelljo@utnet.utoledo.edu">stelljo@utnet.utoledo.edu</a> |  |
| <b>Source:</b>        | <a href="#">Journal of School Health</a> ; May2009,<br>Vol. 79 Issue 5, p224-230, 7p, 1<br>Diagram, 4 Charts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                   |
| <b>Document Type:</b> | Article                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                   |
| <b>Subject Terms:</b> | <a href="#">*SLEEP</a><br><a href="#">*RESEARCH</a><br><a href="#">*TEENAGERS</a><br><a href="#">*HEALTH behavior</a><br><a href="#">*SLEEP deprivation</a><br><a href="#">*CHILD development</a><br><a href="#">*ACADEMIC achievement</a><br><a href="#">PHYSIOLOGICAL aspects</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                   |

Article Record

## Adolescents' Sleep Behaviors and Perceptions of Sleep

First Page of the Article showing the Abstract

HEATHER NOLAND, MED<sup>1</sup>  
JAMES H. PRICE, PH.D, MPH<sup>2</sup>  
JOSEPH DAKE, PH.D, MPH<sup>3</sup>  
SUSAN K. TELLJOHANN, HSD, CHES<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND:** Sleep duration affects the health of children and adolescents. Shorter sleep durations have been associated with poorer academic performance, unintentional injuries, and obesity in adolescents. This study extends our understanding of how adolescents perceive and deal with their sleep issues.

**METHODS:** General education classes were randomly selected from a convenience sample of three high schools in the Midwest. Three hundred eighty-four ninth- to twelfth-grade students (57%) completed a self-administered valid and reliable questionnaire on sleep behaviors and perceptions of sleep.

**RESULTS:** Most respondents (91.9%) obtained inadequate sleep ( $\leq 9$  hours) on most school nights of the week, with 10% reporting less than 6 hours of sleep each week night. The majority indicated that not getting enough sleep had the following effects on them: being more tired during the day (93.7%), having difficulty paying attention (83.6%), lower grades (60.8%), increase in stress (59.0%), and having difficulty getting along with others (57.7%). Some students reported engaging in harmful behaviors to help them sleep: taking sleeping pills (6.0%), smoking a cigarette to relax (5.7%), and drinking alcohol in the evening (2.9%). Students who received fewer hours of sleep were significantly more likely to report being stressed ( $p = .02$ ) and were more likely to be overweight ( $p = .04$ ).

The schools with whom the authors are affiliated.

### Author Affiliations:

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- 3Associate Professor, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH 43606



# Finding Primary Sources

To find primary documents on the web, try the following internet search  
topic + “primary source”



# Secondary Sources

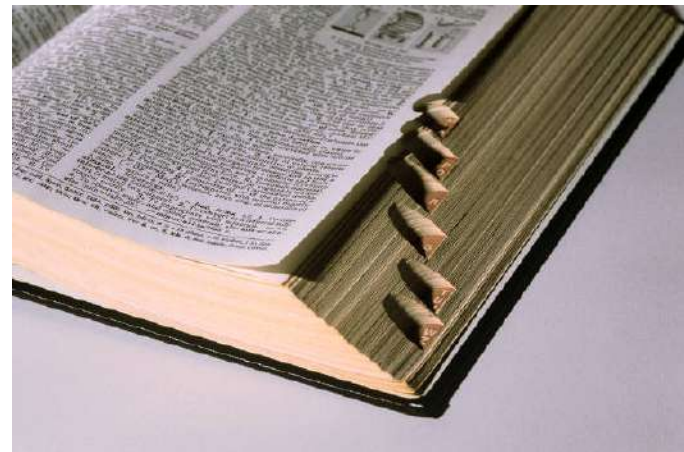
- Secondary sources of information are derived from primary sources
  - Summaries of primary sources
  - Analyses or interpretations of primary sources

# Why use secondary sources?

- To get expert opinions in order to evaluate what really happened.
- To gain insight by examining the same event from different perspectives.
- To form your own opinion.
- To save time by reading information collected from a number of different sources.

# Secondary Source Examples

- Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias
- Articles that review other sources
- Textbooks
- Biographies





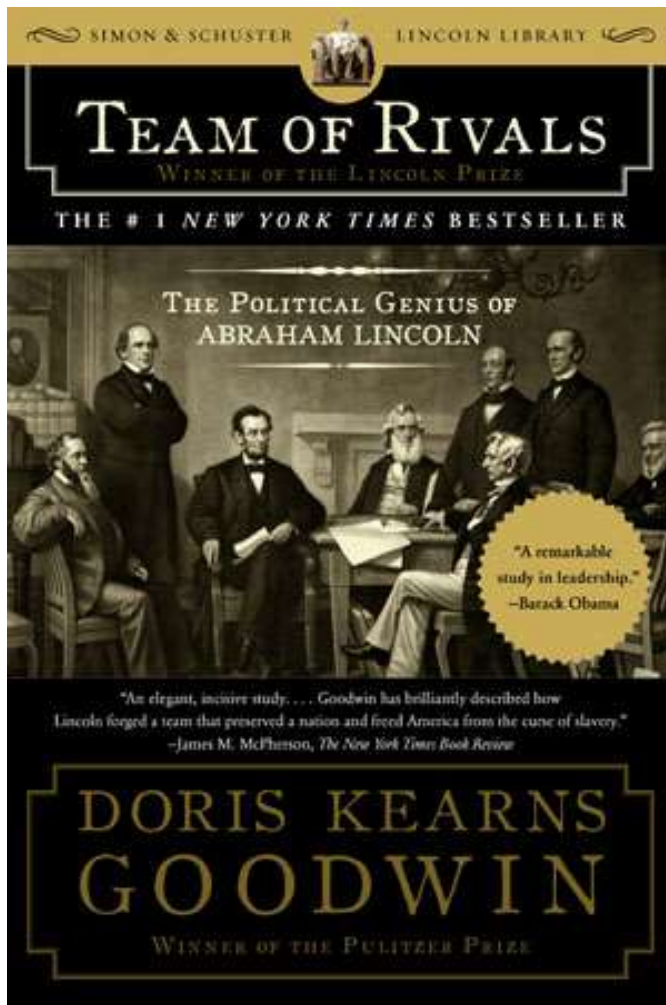


Image taken from <http://www.doriskearnsgoodwin.com/>

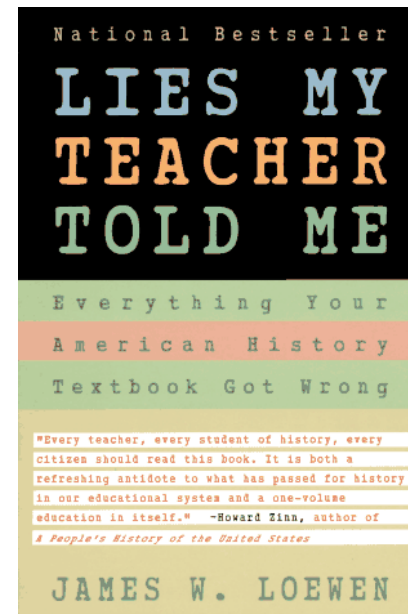


Image taken from  
<http://sundown.afro.illinois.edu/liesmyteachertoldme.php>

## Examples of Secondary Sources:

Biographies

Textbooks

Encyclopedias

Historiographies

# Finding Secondary Sources

- Use the library catalog
- Ask a librarian
- Use article databases
- Search Google Books

# Secondary Source Example

The image on the right shows a snippet of a review of the book Lies My Teacher Told Me.

Book reviews are secondary sources.

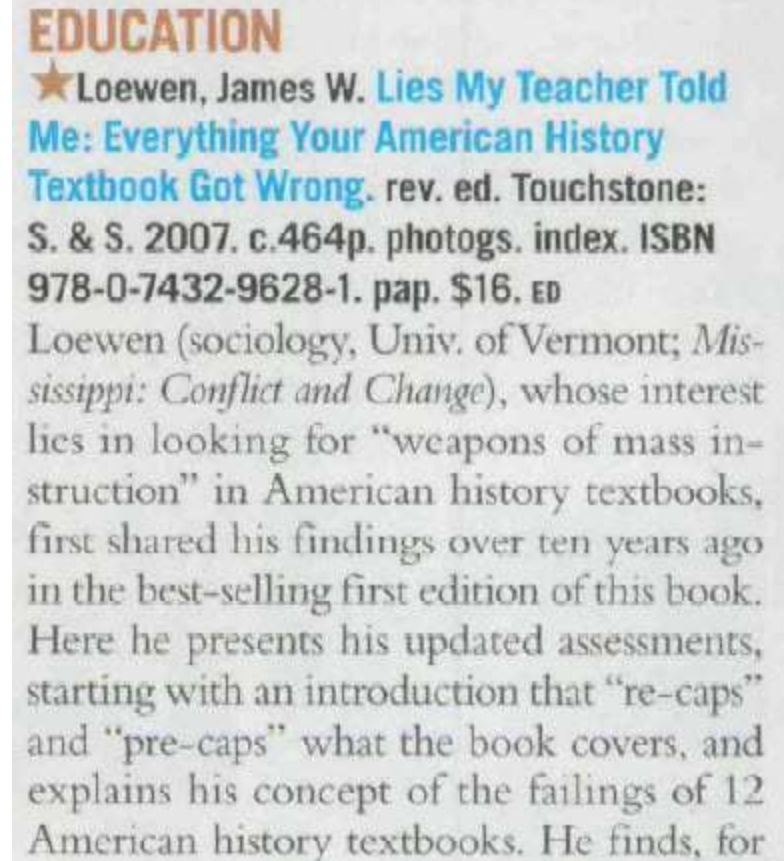


Image taken from: Lay, Suzanne. "Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong." *Library Journal* 132.18 (2007): 76-81. *Academic Search Premier*. EBSCO. Web. 17 Dec. 2010.

# Both Primary and Secondary sources may have a slant or bias

You need to look at both primary and secondary sources critically to see if they are promoting a particular point of view or showing both sides of an issue. Bias can also show up by what is left out, as much as by what is left in.

## Primary Source Bias Example:

### *John Adams Personal Papers*

In his personal letters to Thomas Jefferson, John Adams viewed his role in the creation of the Declaration of Independence as central. But, Thomas Jefferson, as the primary author of the document, gets much of the credit in history textbooks.

## Secondary Source Bias Example:

### *History Textbooks*

A history textbook is a secondary source.

Because there is so much history to cover, much of what is discussed shows the positives and not the negatives. The author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* provides less flattering, although factual, portraits of some individuals who have played significant roles in the history of the United States.

# Reading Sources

Ask these basic questions about every source, no matter how obvious the answer might seem.

- Who wrote this?
- What does it say?
- When was it written?
- Where was it written?
- Why was it written?

# Summing Up

It is important to determine the type of information you are looking at.

- Primary sources are original sources of information
- Secondary sources summarize, analyze, or critique primary sources
- Both primary and secondary sources can be good sources of information, but you need to critically evaluate them.