**Evaluating Sources**

One question that historians face all the time is who to believe? What makes one account more trustworthy than another?

In history we will encounter primary documents and secondary documents. Part of sourcing documents is figuring out whether the source is primary or secondary and then evaluating the reliability of these documents.

**Directions:** Using a dictionary, please fill in the definitions below. Once you have done that answer the questions that follow about primary and secondary sources.

1. What is a primary source?  
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   1. What are two examples of primary sources?
      1. **\_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
      2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a secondary source?  
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   1. What are two examples of secondary sources?
      1. **\_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
      2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is more reliable – primary sources or secondary sources? Why?

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4. Tips for checking the news to see If what you are reading is real:

-Pay attention to the domain and URL (abcnews.com is legitimate, abcnews.com.co is not)

-Read the “About Us”—if the language is melodramatic and overblown, you should be skeptical

-Look at the quotes in a story, or lack thereof, look for professors or academics and if they are talking

about research, look up those studies!

-Look at who said the quotes. Are they from a reliable source? Can you google them to check?

-Understand the difference between a fact and an opinion or editorial piece

**Evaluating Sources**

**Directions:** Using your knowledge of sources to evaluate the trustworthiness of the following sources. For each historical question evaluate which source you trust more and in complete sentences explain why.

1. Historical Question: Who was present at the signing of the Declaration of Independence?
   1. Source 1: Hollywood movie about the American Revolution made 2001.
   2. Source 2: Book written by a famous historian who is an expert on the American Revolution, published in 1999.   
        
      Which do you trust more? Why?

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1. Historical Question: What was the layout of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz?
   1. Source 1: Interview with 80 year-old Holocaust survivor in 1985.
   2. Source 2: Map of concentration camp found in Nazi files.   
        
      Which do you trust more? Why?

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1. Historical Question: Why were Japanese Americans put in internment camps during WWII?
   1. Source 1: Government film explaining internment from 1942.
   2. Source 2: Government report on Japanese Internment from 1983 based on declassified government documents.   
        
      Which do you trust more? Why?

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1. Historical Question: Should the United States lower the drinking age to 18?
   1. Source 1: Editorial in a newspaper written by a 19-year old college student
   2. Source 2: Research study showing the amount of traffic accidents/deaths relating to alcohol by age

Which do you trust more? Why?

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