

Source evaluation



Use different types of source

- Good research involves looking beyond the first websites you find when you search
- A range of types means you can use books, magazines, articles, journals, videos.
- It does not matter if you read a book or magazine online – this is still a different type of source.
- You should aim to include a range of sources, both primary and secondary.
- You need to be careful to ensure the sources you use are **reliable**.



Primary and Secondary Sources

- **Primary sources** are original documents or sources.
- **Secondary sources** are based on primary sources.
- Depending on your project, you may be able to include both primary and secondary sources.
- You will need to create a bibliography (a list of all the sources you used) as part of your project, so keep a list as you work of all your sources. You should record:
 - URL of any websites
 - Titles of books or articles
 - Authors where this is given



Primary sources

- Primary sources are created ‘first hand’ by someone with direct experience of a topic or event.
- They can include (for example) diary entries, video interviews, news footage filmed at the time, photographs.
- You can create your own primary sources in the form of interviews or surveys.
- If you are carrying out your own survey or interview, find out about **research ethics** (e.g. consent)
- Be aware of the limitations of your own research. You probably won’t be able to access a ‘representative sample’.
- If you choose to do an interview, who are you interviewing and why?
- More information about creating primary sources is available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9rn3k7/revision/7>



Secondary sources

- Secondary sources are created by someone removed from the topic or event.
- They are usually created using primary sources.
- For example, a journal article that uses lots of diary entries written at the time, a YouTube documentary using lots of news footage with a new voice over added, a school text book.



Examples of sources

Primary sources

- You create a 4-question survey and send it to friends and family.
- An audio recording you have made of an interview with a local historian.
- Photographs taken at the time of your local town.
- Mobile phone video clips of a demonstration taken at the time.

Secondary sources

- Documents from a local archive.
- A book about local history from the library.
- A website that has brought together the audio of lots of interviews with local people.
- A Podcast
- A YouTube documentary



Source reliability

- Can you trust the sources you have used?
- The key things to consider are:
 - **Who** produced the source?
 - **Where** is it published?
- Don't confuse **reliability** (can I trust this?) with **utility** (is it useful?)
- Don't get too worried about **date**.



Useful places to find out more

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdxj96f>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zkspd6f>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zcjhfcw/revision/11>
- <https://edshare.gcu.ac.uk/6317/1/quality%20of%20sources.pdf>

[Do you think these are **reliable sources**?]

Read through the BBC sources and keep the questions in mind when you look at the next slides.

Can **you** spot a reliable source?

- In the next slides you will look at some examples of **secondary** sources.
- Have a look and decide whether you think they are **reliable**.
- If so, why?
- If not, why not?
- A source doesn't have to be completely reliable or completely unreliable – you might decide that it is somewhere in the middle.



Example 1

A self-published history book on Amazon.

- The author bio reads “I am an expert in local history” but you can’t find out anything else about her.
- It was published last year.
- You can spot several spelling mistakes in the first pages.
- The information you are interested in is similar to information you have found on a local history web site.

Example 2

A YouTube video about John Blanke produced by The Black Curriculum
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiwddQmyvd4&t=5s>

- The original video appears on the website <https://theblackcurriculum.com/> which is a charity addressing the lack of Black British history in the national curriculum.
- There are other sources with the same information such as Wikipedia, Museum of London and there is a website <https://www.johnblanke.com/> about him.

Example 3

Data from a website published by an organisation that campaigns for teenagers to be given the vote.

- The information was published in 2016.
- You can find the same information published on the BBC news site and they give your source as a link in their story.
- There are sources given for the information such as a YouGov poll.

Example 4

A blog about how to have beautiful skin published by a social media influencer.

- They are a well-known influencer with over 2 million followers.
- They have been interviewed by several major news organisations.
- The blog has several links to where you can buy products featured.
- There are lots of comments by people who followed the recommendations and now have better skin.
- You can't find any links to evidence about the suggestions in the blog.

Summary

- Use **different types** of source (eg, books, websites, videos)
- If appropriate, use both **primary** and **secondary** sources
- Think about how **useful** the sources are – are they **relevant** to your Project idea or question?
- **Use** your research as you develop your Project idea or answer your question
- **Record your sources** so that someone else could find them
- Think carefully about how **reliable** each source is.