

ACADEMIC TEXTS

English for Degree Entrance (EDE) compiled by Carrie Molinski & Sue Slessor.

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Please visit the web version of *English for Degree Entrance (EDE)* (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/englishdegreentrance/>) to access the complete book, interactive activities and videos.

Introduction

In this module, you are introduced to the concepts of primary and secondary sources and their differences. You are provided a brief overview of the differences between academic and non-academic texts. These concepts are foundational in developing your knowledge base to dive deeper and explore the differences between academic and non-academic writing in more detail. Being able to distinguish between these sources is not only important for your career, but also for several assignments in this course.

Learning Objectives

- Examine primary and secondary sources and their impact on research.
- Identify key differences between academic and non-academic writing and texts including their source formats, writing conventions and where they are found.

To Do List

- Read the Introduction to the differences between academic and non-academic writing.
- Watch the video, *What is Academic Writing?*
- Read, watch, and Check Your Understanding of the 9-video and H5P series on *Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources*.
- Complete the Academic and Non-Academic Texts Assignment in Blackboard.

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ACADEMIC WRITING VS. NON-ACADEMIC WRITING

Introduction

Academic writing is typically found in a post-secondary setting where experts have produced works based on research and used others' work to validate their findings. These also tend to be peer-reviewed works that are reliable and can be proven. On the other hand, non-academic writing would typically appear in a “magazine-like” work that is usually written by non-experts for the purpose to entertain, inform or persuade you to believe in something or buy something. For this course, you will be producing academic writing by including various other peer-reviewed materials to support your point.

Watch It: What is Academic Writing?

Watch What is academic writing? (3 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/1pE-ohVv9e0>) to review the characteristics of academic writing:

Attribution & References

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ACADEMIC TEXTS: PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SOURCES

Introduction

We classify information or sources in the following three main ways:

- **Firsthand information**—information in its original form, not translated or published in another form (i.e., primary sources)
- **Secondhand information**—a restatement, analysis or interpretation of original information (i.e., secondary sources)
- **Third-hand information**—a summary or repackaging of original information, often based on published secondary information (i.e., tertiary sources)

Types of Scholarly Sources: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary

Primary Sources

Primary sources present original findings or research. Authors describe their research and their conclusions

- Journal articles describing original research
- Theses and dissertations

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources analyze, summarize or synthesize original research. They comment on information presented in primary sources

- Review articles (often have “review” in the title)
- Books (including textbooks)

Note: Biotech companies often have review articles on their websites. Though they are designed to sell

products, they can contain useful information and figures. This type of review article is also considered to be grey literature (see end of page for more information).

Tertiary Sources

Tertiary sources index, abstract, organize, compile or digest other sources.

- Dictionaries and encyclopedias
- Handbooks and guidebooks

Which Source Should You Use?

It is important to know when to use each type of scholarly source:

- **Primary Sources**—Use primary sources to provide credible evidence for your arguments and to back up specific claims. As primary sources provide authoritative, first-hand research information, they are important to use in your work.
- **Secondary Sources**—Use secondary sources to gain an overview of your topic. As secondary resources summarize or synthesize a number of primary resources, they are useful to understand the various aspects of your research topic.
- **Tertiary Sources**—Tertiary sources are used to provide technical information or general background information. Refer to tertiary sources when you need definitions or basic information about a topic.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Check your Understanding: Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary and Secondary Sources (Text Version)

Watch Primary and secondary sources with nLibraries (5 minutes) on YouTube

(<https://youtu.be/Ba8oqb4nCrQ>)

You can read the [Primary and Secondary Sources with nCLibraries transcript \[PDF\]](http://tiny.cc/tvx8vz) (<http://tiny.cc/tvx8vz>)

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Primary sources defined (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/bMlR5wMro6o>)

Watch the two previous videos and then answer the question:

1. Which of the following are characteristics of primary sources?
 - a. Created by direct witnesses
 - b. Original documents
 - c. Analyze the work of others
 - d. Both a & c
 - e. Both a & b

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Primary source examples (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/3dXRSn3LMZI>) and answer the following question:

2. For a news item to be considered a primary source, it should be written at the time an event is occurring. True or false?

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: When to use primary sources (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/pAy7G4Wn3vY>) and answer the following question:

3. Primary sources are useful for which of the following purposes?
 - a. Evidence for theories
 - b. Provide perspectives on topics
 - c. Focal point for discussion
 - d. All of the above

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Secondary sources defined (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/|ZH9zAbbqgA>) and answer the following question:

4. Which of the following are characteristics of secondary sources?
 - a. They analyze primary sources.
 - b. They are a step removed from what they are describing.
 - c. They are usually published works.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. None of the above.

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Examples (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/oxpluaxlFzM>) and answer the following question:

5. Which of the following would **not** be considered a secondary source for a paper on Lake Erie yellow perch populations?
 - a. Raw numeric data containing yellow perch counts from Ontario’s Ministry of Fisheries and Natural Resources.
 - b. Journal article titled, “Estimating the size of historical yellow perch runs in Lake Erie” by Chad Meenings and Robert Lackey.
 - c. *The Encyclopedia of Great Lakes Fish* edited by Davis Allorman.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. None of the above.

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: When should you use secondary sources? (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/7r0c9EigaJk>) and answer the following question:

6. Secondary sources are good places to find raw, unanalyzed data. True or false?

Watch Primary and secondary sources compared (< 1 minute) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/4FbxjQ0rp_w) and answer the following question:

7. Which of the following would be considered a secondary source (choose all that apply)?
 - a. *Hamlet* by Shakespeare
 - b. Article titled “Hamlet’s dramatic arras” by Rebecca Olson
 - c. Article titled “Communication in the 21st Century: The Blog” by Mark Kellen
 - d. Transcripts of published blogs
 - e. A documentary on theories of changing owl migratory patterns.
 - f. Data describing population numbers of the spotted owl.

Check your answer ¹

Activity source: “Primary and Secondary Sources ” compiled by Jessica Jones and oeratgc, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) from “Primary and Secondary Sources” In *Niagara College Libraries + Learning Commons Information Skills Online Handbook* by Jackie Chambers Page and Siscoe

1. **1)** e. **2)** True **3)** d. Primary sources can be used as focal points for discussions, evidence for theories, and/or to gain perspective on a topic. **4)** d. **5)** a. **6)** False. Raw, unanalyzed data is a primary source. **7)** b, c, & e are all secondary sources.

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Primary and Secondary Sources: The Importance of Context

Check Your Understanding: Primary and Secondary Sources (Context)

Primary and Secondary Sources – Context (Text Version)

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Context (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/lkFFajTXjus>) and then answer the following question:

If a source is considered primary for one research project, it will be considered primary for all other research projects. True or false?

Check your answer²

Activity source: Primary and Secondary Sources – Context ” compiled by Jessica Jones and oeratgc, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) from “Primary and Secondary Sources” In *Niagara College Libraries + Learning Commons Information Skills Online Handbook* by Jackie Chambers Page and Siscoe Boschman, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). / Converted to Text by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, edited by Jessica Jones.

2. False. A source’s classification as primary or secondary can change depending on the topic you’re studying.

Primary and Secondary Sources: Review:

Check Your Understanding: Primary and Secondary Sources (Review)

Primary and Secondary Sources – Review (Text Version)

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Review (< 1 minute) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/qCZRMXMs4QE>) and answer the following question:

Which type of source is usually viewed as analysis or interpretation?

- a. Primary
- b. Secondary
- c. Neither
- d. Both

Check your answer³

Activity source: “Primary and Secondary Sources – Review ” compiled by Jessica Jones and oeratgc, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) from “Primary and Secondary Sources” In *Niagara College Libraries + Learning Commons Information Skills Online Handbook* by Jackie Chambers Page and Siscoe Boschman, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). / Converted to Text by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, edited by Jessica Jones.

Summary

This module provided a brief introduction to the differences between academic and non-academic

3. b. Secondary sources usually interpret or analyze primary sources.

writing and texts as well as primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. In the next module, you will explore the differences between scholarly and popular sources in more detail.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (videos & H5P) is adapted from “6.5 – Primary And Secondary Sources” (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/primarysecondary/>) In *Communication Essentials for College* by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) Adaptations include the removal of learning objectives and the addition of introduction.

- Content in “Introduction” section is adapted from “10 Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Sources” (<https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/choosingsources/chapter/primary-secondary-tertiary-sources/>) In *Choosing & Using Sources: A Guide to Academic Research, 1st Canadian Edition* by Lindsey MacCallum, licensed under [CC BY 4.0.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) Removal of all content except for the introduction.
- Content in “Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources” section is adapted from “1.4 Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources” In *Library Skills for 2nd Year Biological Sciences* by Lauren Stieglitz, licensed under [CC BY 4.0.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

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- This chapter (text, H5P activities and embedded videos) was adapted from “Primary and Secondary Sources” (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/ncinfoskills/chapter/primary-and-secondary-sources/>) In *Niagara College Libraries + Learning Commons Information Skills Online Handbook* by Jackie Chambers Page and Siscoe Boschman, licensed under [CC BY 4.0.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) Adaptations include updates for improved accessibility. Attributions noted for this chapter’s videos were noted in a final video, which have been transcribed into text below for consistency and “Credits” video removed. Changed first sentence.

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