### Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy

**(the short version)**

Primary sources are materials in a variety of formats that serve as original evidence documenting a time period, an event, a work, people, or ideas.

A person knowledgeable in the use of primary sources can:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTUALIZE</th>
<th>FIND AND ACCESS</th>
<th>READ, UNDERSTAND, AND SUMMARIZE</th>
<th>INTERPRET, ANALYZE, AND EVALUATE</th>
<th>USE AND INCORPORATE</th>
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| 1A - Distinguish primary + secondary sources based on research Q  
1B - Brainstorm possible primary sources for a project  
1C - Generate research questions based on primary sources  
1D - Understand that research is iterative - sources inform Qs, Qs inform sources | 2A - Identify where primary sources might be found  
2B - Search for and locate primary sources. Use tools like catalogs and finding aids.  
2C - Know the difference between descriptions about sources that are found online + digitized sources  
2D - Understand how the historical record is shaped.  
Understand that some evidence never existed, didn’t survive, or is not publicly accessible.  
2E - Recognize how institutional/platform access policies differ and affect use of primary sources. | 3A - Read and examine a source. Read script, font, language; understand or operate a technology; comprehend vocabulary, syntax, communication norms; etc.  
3B - Identify and communicate information in a source.  
Summarize content; identify key components such as format, how created, by whom, when, etc.  
3C - Understand iterations (excerpts, transcriptions, translations) + transformations (publishing, copying) | 4A - Assess the appropriateness of a primary source for a project.  
4B - Critically evaluate perspectives of creators. Recognize tone and bias.  
Determine original purposes and audiences.  
4C - Situate a primary source in context.  
Context may be historical, cultural, biographical, technical, or curatorial.  
4D - Identify, interrogate, and consider silences, gaps, contradictions, power in the documentary record.  
4E - Factor physical and material elements into interpretation of primary sources.  
4F - Demonstrate historical empathy, curiosity about the past, and appreciation for historical actors. | 5A - Synthesize a variety of sources to construct, support, or dispute an argument.  
5B - Respect privacy rights and cultural contexts when using primary sources.  
5C - Cite appropriately.  
5D - Adhere to copyright and privacy laws when using primary sources. |

**Teaching tip:**

Use these broad objectives to build specific, measurable learning outcomes. Just a few at a time - keep it simple!

Cite this: Katz, Robin M. “Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy (the short version).” Full standards: https://www2.archivists.org/standards/guidelines-for-primary-source-literacy

For more resources visit: www.robinmkatz.com

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