**Primary v Secondary Sources**

**Sources**

Sources are any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate and provide information about the past. They are used as evidence to indicate whether something happened or not.

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| **Primary Sources** | **Secondary Sources** |
| **Primary sources** are objects and documents that were created or written either during the time period being studied or at a later date by someone who was present at the time.  They reflect the individual viewpoint of a participant or observer.  Primary sources enable the historian to get as close as possible to what actually happened during a historical event or time period.  **Examples:** depending on the event and place, primary sources may include bones, stone tools, letters, newspapers, art or photographs.  Primary sources can be divided into written sources and archaeological sources. Written primary sources include poems, songs, letters, paintings, inscriptions etc. Archaeological sources are objects that were made in the past. They include many artefacts such as tools, weapons, pottery, coins, sculptures, tombs, cities. | A **secondary source** is a reconstruction of the past written or created by people living at the time after the period that is being studied. To create secondary sources, historians often locate information in primary sources, interpret that information and then use it to explain what happened.  **Examples:** books, articles, websites, models, timelines, documentary films. |

**How do we know if a source is reliable or not?**

Sources can sometimes be biased. This means that they are just one person’s opinion, we are seeing only their point of view. One way to test this is to compare it with other sources to see if the same conclusion can be made.

Questions that need to be asked about sources are:

* What type of source is this?
* Who wrote or created the source and when was it created?
* Why was this source created?
* What evidence does it provide?
* What was happening at the time it was created?
* Can I trust the source?