

Data Sources

There are two sources of data. Primary data and secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data is information that is collected first hand. The information is collected directly from the source by means of field studies, such as surveys, interviews or focus groups.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is data that has already been collected by someone else.

Exercise 1

1. Indicate whether each of the following is an example of primary data or secondary data:
 - (i) Alan counted the number of red cars passing the school gate.
 - (ii) Helen examined records at a maternity hospital to find out how many babies were born each day in December.
 - (iii) Robbie threw a dice 100 times and recorded the results to investigate if the dice is fair.
 - (iv) Niamh used the Internet to check the number of gold medals won by each competing country at the Beijing Olympics.
2. Write down which of the following is an example of primary data and which is an example of secondary data.
 - a.) Tom counted the number of red cars that passed a through a road junction near his house.
 - b.) Jane looked on the Internet to find the number of houses sold in Dublin in 2010.
 - c.) Ian used a table of statistics on the ages of footballers in a newspaper for his homework.
 - d.) Gillian tossed a coin 100 times to see if it is fair coin.
3. What is the difference between primary and secondary data?
4. Justin is using NASA remote sensing data to explore photosynthesis. Is he using primary or secondary data?