



Al-Mustaql University

College of Science



Scientific Thinking and Research Skills

Third Year Students / 1st Semester

Types of Information Sources

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Biochemistry Department

By

Prof. Dr. Naser Abdulhasan Naser

Types of Information Sources

What types of information sources are available?

Types of Information Sources

- Primary Sources
- Secondary Sources

What are Primary Sources?

Primary sources are original documents or original works.
Primary sources are produced at the time of an event,
without interpretation or commentary

Examples of Primary Sources

- Books/Monographs*
- Journal articles *
- Magazine articles *
- Newspaper articles *
- Internet resources *
- Reports *
- Letters
- Photographs
- Theses
- Poems
- Patents

* Can be primary or secondary

What are Secondary Sources?

Secondary sources are sources that interpret or analyze primary sources. Secondary sources are further removed from the events described or mentioned in primary sources.

Examples of Secondary Sources

- Biographies
- Books/Monographs
- Electronic Databases
- Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias
- Histories
- Handbooks
- Review Articles
- Textbooks
- Any Index
- Any Bibliography Used to Locate Primary Sources

Primary vs. Secondary

	Primary Source	Secondary Source
Art	Original Artwork	Article critiquing the piece of art
Engineering	Patent	Derwent Patents Index
History	Original U.S. Constitution	Book about the Constitution
Science	Original journal article	Biological Abstracts

Selection

How do I select the right source?

Selection depends on your topic, the type of information you need, and what is available.

If you need ...	You might try ...
Current information	Newspaper or WWW
Scholarly articles	Journal
Popular interest articles	Magazine
Lots of organized information	Book or encyclopedia
To find article citations	Index or database