Primary and Secondary Sources

PRIMARY SOURCES are original documents or objects created at the time of or in response to an event in history. We all create primary sources of our lives on a daily basis, from fast food receipts to home movies to diaries.

RESEARCHERS use primary sources

SECONDARY SOURCES analyze and interpret primary source materials. If an archaeologist dug up your old receipts and home movies, they might write an article about how you lived.
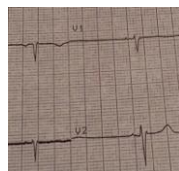
Letters

Photographs

Government Documents

Journalists

Documentaries

History Books

Ephemera

Scrapbooks

Historic Newspapers

Authors

Historians

Journal Articles

Maps

Memorabilia

Genealogists

Novels

Encyclopedias

Anthropologists
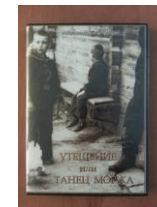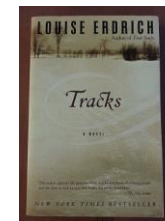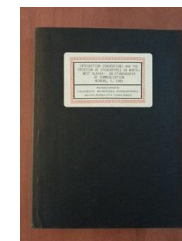
Textbooks

Original Music Scores and Recordings

Medical Records

Original Art

Students
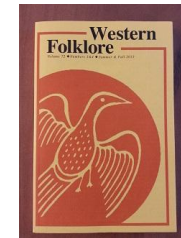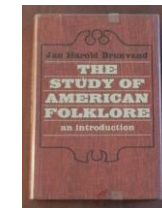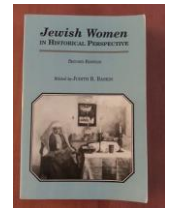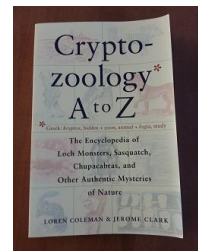
Dissertations
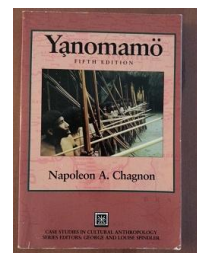
Ethnographic Monographs