

Primary Sources

	Primary Sources	Ideas for using Primary Sources
Brainstorming	Newspapers, photographs, diaries, journals, documents, treaties, letters, historical documents, websites, maps, manuscript, archeological artifacts, oral histories, census records, samplers (made), furniture, quilts, tools, recordings, house,(always primary source example: cave painting: however there some that are contextual: authenticating resources; facsimiles, Primary source materials are not necessarily “the truth” but may represent someone’s point of view, may have their own values and biases, physical location, selectiveness of the information, historical sites (museums, cemeteries, archives, Forts, Battle Sites, Museum Sites on the Web (e.g. Monticello, Virtual Field Trips) Catalogs, television, radio, film, tapes, food, diet, customs	Read, observe, compare, categorize, analyze, graph or diagram, use a matrix for complex comparison, use a Venn diagram for comparing two or three, research other sources to determine the credibility, compare to things in our lives, our times, determine function, retrieve data (e.g. from maps), determine point of view and people’s values, re-enact from sources, create something parallel (e.g. use Sarah Morton’s story to research Sutter’s Fort and Write a “Day in the Life of Sutter’s Fort Child
Grade levels		
K	Field trips, real items, photos, posters, oral history, catalogs	applying to their own lives and situations, observing, comparing simple categorizing of a few sources
1-2	Field trips, real items, photos, posters, oral history, diaries, (simple writing examples) Stage Coach ticket, hotel bill, Menu, catalog, simple maps; look at a few items at a time	applying to their own lives and situations, all of the above plus diagramming, more items compared (use matrices), what is real and what is not (fact from fiction), examples from non-examples, early analysis
3-4	Everything above, plus primary sources that conflict with one another, more “reading” sources, e.g. newspapers, documents; they can handle multiple items.	Generate activities that invite students to overtly recognize point of view and bias, all of the above, plus more in-depth analysis
5-6	Real documents (May Flower Compact, Declaration of Independence (compare drafts with final document), identification of unknown items., recognizing point of view and bias	recognizing point of view and bias, generating that more spontaneously, and applying to their own lives and situations