

Defining Primary Sources

Investigative Question

When is a source a primary source?

1. Read the information below and examine the source items.

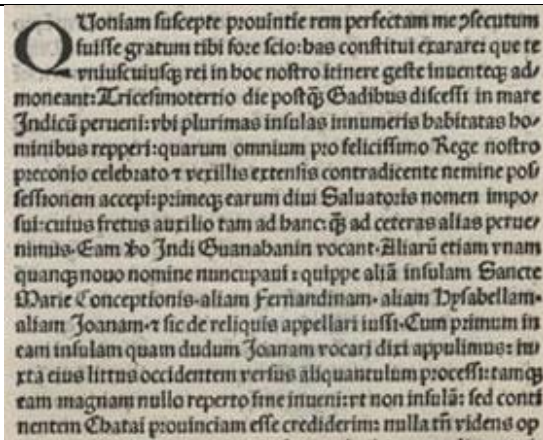
A **primary source** is something that was created in the time under study. A primary source is an original work created by someone who witnessed or wrote close to an event.

A **secondary source** is created using information provided by someone else. Secondary sources are often created with some distance from the event.

2. Consider these questions:
 - Are these primary or secondary sources?
 - What do the items tell you about Christopher Columbus?
 - What don't the items tell you about Christopher Columbus?
3. Discuss: When is a source a primary source?
4. Brainstorm and discuss answers to finish these statements:

Primary sources are _____

Primary sources are not _____



TITLE: Epistola . . . de Insulis Indie nuper inventis (Letter Concerning the Islands Recently Discovered.)

“There I found very many islands, filled with innumerable people, and I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses, done by proclamation and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me.”

CREATED/PUBLISHED: by Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) in Rome: 1493, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress



TITLE: Columbus taking possession of the new country.

CREATED/PUBLISHED: Boston, U.S.A.: Published by the Prang Educational Co., 1893. 1 print : chromolithograph, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Understanding Goal: Primary sources are created at the time under study.

Adapted from: Defining Primary sources, Northern Virginia Adventure of the American Mind Partnership. <http://www.pslarning.org/handbook/>. Accessed 10/02/06

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Published by THE FRANG EDUCATIONAL CO., Boston, U.S.A.

COLUMBUS TAKING POSSESSION OF THE NEW COUNTRY.

The voyage had lasted 70 days (35 of which being lost by delay at the Canary Islands), from August 3 to October 12, 1492, when Columbus landed on the island called Guanahani by the natives, and named by him San Salvador. This island was rediscovered by the English, and by them called Watling Island. Columbus took possession of the land in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the crown of Castile.

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