

# INFORMATION SOURCES: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources, and Gray literature

**Primary source:** Original manuscript, documents or records used in preparing a published or unpublished work.

**Secondary source:** A published or unpublished work that relies on primary source(s).

**Tertiary source:** A published or unpublished work that is based on secondary sources.

**Gray (=grey) literature:** Source material(s) not available through the usual systems of publication (e.g. books or periodicals) and distribution.

*\* Certain disciplines may use different criteria for identifying Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary literature. Check with your professor for help specific to your discipline.*

	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Tertiary Sources	Gray Literature
Type of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Autobiography</b></li> <li>• <b>Case studies</b></li> <li>• <b>Correspondence</b></li> <li>• <b>Diaries/ Personal papers</b></li> <li>• <b>Dissertations/Theses</b></li> </ul> <p>(Be sure to distinguish between original and review material in the text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Films: Original dramatic / artistic productions</b></li> <li>• <b>First-person accounts</b></li> <li>• <b>Historical documents</b></li> </ul> <p>(Constitution, treaties... &amp; copies of...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Laboratory data</b></li> <li>• <b>Minutes of meetings</b></li> <li>• <b>Original manuscripts / documents</b></li> <li>• <b>Original research</b></li> <li>• <b>Photographs</b></li> <li>• <b>Religious documents (Bible, scripture...)</b></li> <li>• <b>Speeches</b></li> <li>• <b>Technical reports</b></li> <li>• <b>Works of fiction, poetry, drama...</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Analysis</b></li> <li>• <b>Biography</b></li> <li>• <b>Criticism</b></li> <li>• <b>Dissertations/Theses (Literature review materials)</b></li> <li>• <b>Editorials</b></li> <li>• <b>Film documentaries</b></li> <li>• <b>Reviews of the literature</b></li> <li>• <b>Work that relies on <u>primary sources</u></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Film documentaries</b></li> <li>• <b>Work that is based entirely on secondary sources</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conference proceedings</b></li> <li>• <b>Data exchange</b></li> <li>• <b>Dissertations / Theses</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental impact statements</b></li> <li>• <b>Government documents / publications</b></li> <li>• <b>Market research reports</b></li> <li>• <b>Online documents</b></li> <li>• <b>Oral presentations</b></li> <li>• <b>Technical reports</b></li> <li>• <b>Working papers</b></li> </ul>
Author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Authors reporting on personal experiences/work.</b></li> <li>• <b>In academics or research, often written by an expert or graduate student in the field.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Author has an interest in the topic.</b></li> <li>• <b>Can be an expert in the field.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Author has an interest in the topic.</b></li> <li>• <b>Free-lance writers</b></li> <li>• <b>Staff writer</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Author works in the field</b></li> <li>• <b>Expert in the field.</b></li> <li>• <b>Masters or PhD candidates</b></li> </ul> <p>(Continued on back)</p>

## **INFORMATION SOURCES: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources, and Gray literature**

	<b>Primary Sources</b>	<b>Secondary Sources</b>	<b>Tertiary Sources</b>	<b>Gray Literature</b>
<b>Where published</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Gray literature</li> <li>• Monograph</li> <li>• Scholarly journal</li> <li>• Refereed/peer reviewed journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Encyclopedias</li> <li>• Gray literature</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Pamphlets</li> <li>• Scholarly journal</li> <li>• Refereed/peer reviewed journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books / textbooks</li> <li>• Gray literature</li> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Trade journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business / Industry publications</li> <li>• Government publications (Federal, state &amp; local)</li> <li>• Unpublished dissertation / Theses</li> </ul>
<b>Where Found</b>	<p>Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Literature can be found in a variety print sources and electronic databases.</p>			<p>Gray literature is also found in a variety of print sources and electronic databases, though sometimes can be harder to locate.</p> <p>Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caloosahatchee Documents</li> <li>• Charlotte Harbor Info.</li> <li>• Dissertation Abstracts</li> <li>• GrayLIT Network <a href="http://www.osti.gov/graylit/">http://www.osti.gov/graylit/</a></li> <li>• Library of Congress <a href="http://loc.gov">loc.gov</a></li> <li>• National Sea Grant Lib <a href="http://nsgd.gso.uri.edu/">http://nsgd.gso.uri.edu/</a></li> <li>• NCJRS <a href="http://ncjrs.org/">ncjrs.org/</a></li> <li>• NOAA <a href="http://noaa.gov">noaa.gov</a></li> <li>• NTIS <a href="http://ntis.gov">ntis.gov</a></li> <li>• PapersFirst database</li> <li>• Proceedings</li> <li>• Scientific &amp; Technical Information Network <a href="http://stinet.dtic.mil/">http://stinet.dtic.mil/</a></li> <li>• US Census Bureau <a href="http://census.gov">census.gov</a></li> <li>• USDA <a href="http://usda.gov">usda.gov</a></li> <li>• USGS <a href="http://usgs.gov">usgs.gov</a></li> </ul>

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