



POTUS Brief: Primary Sources

Project POTUS for Middle School

Middle school entrants in Project POTUS must use at least **1** primary source in their research and cite or credit the source somehow in their video project. See mission brief & contest rules [HERE](#).

Project POTUS: 24 Hours for High School

High school entrants in Project POTUS: 24 Hours must use at least **3** primary sources in their research, and use MLA, APA, & Chicago Style citations somehow during or at the end of their video project. See mission brief & contest rules [HERE](#).

Definition of Primary Sources

“Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects that were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts that retell, analyze, or interpret events, usually at a distance of time or place.”

-From the Library of Congress, “Getting Started with Primary Sources”

Examples of Primary Sources related to Presidential History:

- Photographs, original film, original audio recordings, newsreels
- newspaper articles from the time period of the president's life
- letters written by the presidents or people in their lives
- journals/ diaries kept by the presidents or their family/ staff
- presidential proclamations and executive orders
- laws passed during the president's administration
- public speeches given by the presidents
- oral history interviews with the presidents or their family/staff
- government records from the time period of the president's life
- objects belonging to the president or related to their time in office

AND MORE...

More Resources for Understanding Primary Sources:

READ

Examples of primary vs. secondary sources from the Library of Congress:
<https://ask.loc.gov/faq/303148>

Understanding Perspective in Primary Sources from the National Archives:
<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/document-analysis/english/understanding-perspective-in-primary-sources.pdf>

How to do Document Analysis from the National Archives:
<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>

Lesson Plan from PBS: Analyzing Primary Source Media, 1968–1991

WATCH

Video about primary sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU0fAhss-yg>

For research recommendations and introductory information for each of the American presidents, view the **Project POTUS Case Files**.

One case file per president is linked under their portrait on the Presidential Winners Gallery at projectpotus.org/winners.



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