

# Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources: The American Revolution



Historians use many types of sources to study past events.

**Primary sources** are made by people who witness historical events. These sources are usually created when the events took place.

**Examples:**

- newspaper articles
- photographs
- diaries
- letters

**Secondary sources** are made by historians or other people who research historical events. These sources are usually created after the events took place.

**Examples:**

- history books
- textbooks
- scholarly articles
- documentaries

**Directions:** Read the table containing different sources about the American Revolution (1775–1783). Put a check mark to show whether each source is **primary** or **secondary**.

	Source	Primary	Secondary
1.	<i>The Declaration of Independence</i> , a document from 1776 saying the colonies were independent	✓	
2.	<i>Liberty! The American Revolution</i> , a documentary produced in 2004 about the Revolutionary War		✓
3.	<i>The Articles of Confederation</i> , a document adopted by the Second Continental Congress in 1777	✓	
4.	<i>The American Revolution Reconsidered</i> , a scholarly article written by Meier Schlesinger in 1919		✓
5.	The book <i>1776</i> , written by historian David McCullough in 2005		✓
6.	A sketch by an English officer just after the Battle of Long Island in 1776	✓	
7.	<i>Diary of a Common Soldier in the American Revolution, 1775–1783</i> , a military journal written by soldier Jeremiah Greenman	✓	