Primary Sources in Communication
Primary resources in communication studies are original, firsthand accounts of an event or time period or could be raw data. They are straight from the horse's mouth and can be in any format, including written, visual, electronic, or oral. Primary resources remain unchanged.

- Usually written or made during or close to the event or time period
- Are original documents or materials or original creative works (e.g. writing, art)
- Are factual, not interpretive

Examples:
- Photographs, maps, postcards, posters
- Diaries, journals, letters, speeches
- Government records (census, marriage, military)
- Interviews or oral histories with participants or witnesses (e.g. The Civil Rights Movement) or with people who lived through a particular time (e.g. genocide in Rwanda)
- Creative works (Songs, plays, novels, stories, paintings, drawings, sculptures)
- Artifacts (Coins, furniture, tools, clothing)
- Audio or video recordings (e.g. radio, television programs)
- Internet communications (email, listservs, websites, tweets, blogs)
- Original documents (e.g. birth certificate, will, marriage license, trial transcript)
- Patents
- Proceedings of meetings, conferences, and symposia
- Records of organizations, government agencies (e.g. annual report, treaty, constitution, government document)
- Survey research (e.g. market surveys, public opinion polls)
- Advertisements
- Original research article with raw data
Secondary Sources in Communication
Secondary sources in communication studies have been interpreted by somebody other than the originator. They analyze and interpret primary sources. They are secondhand accounts of an idea or event. They are good places to start your research since they provide good overviews on a topic.

Examples:
- Biographies, biographical works
- Histories
- Literary criticism
- Book, art, theater reviews
- Newspaper articles that interpret
- Bibliographies
- Dictionaries, encyclopedias
- Journal articles that interpret
- Monographs other than fiction and autobiography
- Websites (can also be primary)
- Commentaries

Newspapers – Primary or Secondary Source?
Are newspapers and magazines primary source materials or secondary? It depends!

An article is a primary source if...
- Published at the time of an event OR by a person who experienced an event firsthand
- Includes eyewitness accounts, creative writing, and photographs

An article is a secondary source if...
- Anything that is interpreted or includes opinion
- One step removed from the actual event
- Includes book reviews and editorials