

## *Secondary Sources*

### *What are Secondary Sources?*

- Secondary sources are accounts of historical events written after the event took place and by individuals who did not personally witness them.
- They are based on primary sources and backed up by other secondary sources.
- Often, the term “secondary source” is used interchangeably with the terms “academic source” or “scholarly source.”
- You should usually interpret instructions that ask for secondary sources as asking you for a peer-reviewed journal article or book.

### *Where do I find Secondary Sources?*

- Secondary sources are the product of the analyses of primary sources, with context provided by secondary sources.
- They are generally written by professional historians or students to build on the work of other historians.
- The best place to find secondary sources for your work is the Ashford University Library.



### *What separates a Secondary Source from a Primary Source?*

- Secondary sources and memoirs and oral history interviews are all created after a historical event happened.
- The important difference is that secondary sources are not first-hand accounts, like memoirs or oral history interviews.

### *What about textbooks and encyclopedias? Are they Secondary Sources?*

- Textbooks, encyclopedias and other reference works, and most documentaries and educational websites are not secondary sources because they are based only on secondary sources. They are called tertiary sources.
- Although they provide some good general information that can help students begin the research process, they are generally not acceptable for use in university-level work.