

The Human Body

Information Resources
Bergen Community College Library

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The Scientist or Researcher, the “PRIMARY SOURCE”

- Performs experiment(s) or observations
- Writes a detailed scientific paper describing methods, listing observations or data, giving conclusions.
- Submits paper to scientific publisher – peer reviewed / refereed by other scientists.
- Article is published in a scientific journal for the scientific community.
- Article becomes part of the “scientific record.” (For use by other scientists and researchers.)

Another Scientist or researcher

a “SECONDARY SOURCE” ...

- Writes an article that summarizes research in a field done by other scientists. (This type of article sometimes includes information about research done by the writer himself or herself.)
- This type of articles can be called a “literature review” or a “review article,” “summary,” “commentary” or “overview” of the research topic.

This type of article will not include all the details of the research.

A writer or journalist with a scientific background (also a SECONDARY SOURCE)...

- Writes an article that summarizes the interesting aspects of research for the **general public**.
- This will be in a “**common source**” such as a newspaper or a general news magazine. It can be published in a general science magazine that can be understood by the general public.

**SCIENTIFIC and
MEDICAL JOURNALS**

**GENERAL INTEREST
PERIODICALS**
Magazines and Newspapers

PRIMARY SOURCE

***“SCIENTIFIC”
SECONDARY
SOURCE***

***“COMMON”
SECONDARY
SOURCE***

Is it a “Primary Source” ?

- Was the article written by the researcher (s) / scientist (s) who performed the experiment or did the observations?
 - (Sometimes there are clues such as the use of the “first person” words such as “I” or “we” or “our team.”)
- Does the article include *detailed* hypothesis, methods, materials used, observations, results, data and conclusions?
 - Sometimes methods and materials are available or a “continued online” link will be given.
- Is prior research on the topic well-documented in the bibliography/sources?
- Is there an abstract or summary included at the beginning of the article? (usually)
- Is it possible replicate the research / experiment based on the information in the article?

Use Online Databases to find Primary and Secondary sources in Periodicals

- **ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER**
Indexes magazines and scientific journals.
Citations, abstracts, full text, images
- **PROQUEST Direct**
Indexes magazines, some newspapers and some scientific journals.
Citations, abstracts, full-text, images
- **LEXIS-NEXIS ACADEMIC**
NEWSPAPERS from the U.S. and the world.
Indexes hundreds of newspapers, magazines and journals.
Full text. No images
- **PUBMED** Indexes worldwide medical publications. Comprehensive, fast indexing.

Enjoy learning about Scientific Literature!

