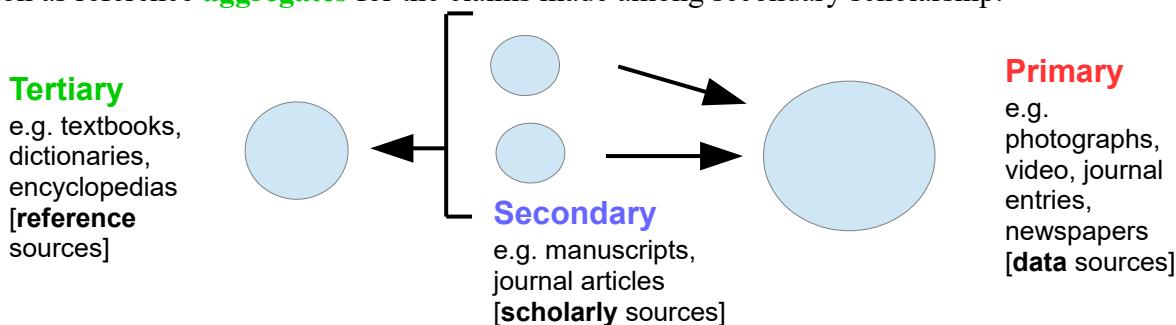


## Working with Sources

*Due to the volume or diversity of different materials that you might engage with during a project, the working with “outside sources”—what to do with them, how to organize them, group them, or consider them—can seem somewhat opaque. This worksheet is a primer to help you consider your sources in a few different ways, and should be helpful to those doing work on annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, historiographies, or any research project that engages with outside material.*

### 1. A Substantive Model: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary

Scholars will often refer to their sources using a *substantive* model that identifies a source's rhetorical “closeness” to the subject they are studying. In this framework, **primary** sources act as **data**, **secondary** sources see scholars **interpreting** that data in order to make claims, and **tertiary** sources function as reference **aggregates** for the claims made among secondary scholarship.



### 2. A Functional Model: BEAM (Background, Exhibit, Argument, Method) Sources

A more *functional* approach to working with sources considers *how individual sources are useful for you* in the project you are working on. The BEAM Method, developed by Joseph Bizup (2008) outlines four ways that you can use sources. Importantly, a single source could function in any/all of these ways for you—you get to choose how you use your sources:

**Background Sources** constitute “materials whose claims a writer accepts as fact, whether these ‘facts’ are taken as general information or as evidence to support the writer’s own assertions.”

**Exhibit Sources** include “materials a writer offers for explication, analysis, or interpretation... [A writer] must do rhetorical work to establish their exhibit’s meanings and significance.”

**Argument Sources** are “materials whose claims a writer affirms, disputes, refines, or extends...”

**Method Sources** are “materials from which a writer derives a governing concept or a manner of working.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Bizup, “BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing,” *Rhetoric Review* 27 no. 1 (2006): 72-86; available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07350190701738858>

This half of the worksheet is a *source matrix*—an accounting device for keeping track of the sources you are using in your project. If you are just beginning a project, this should be enough space to get yourself comfortable with the purpose/usefulness of this framework. If you are working on a larger/longer-term project, you can reproduce a version of this table to fit your needs.<sup>2</sup>

Title	Author	Date	Research Question	Method	Thesis	B/E/A/M?

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<sup>2</sup> Alternately, if you are currently using a source management software like Zotero or Refworks, you can reproduce it there using keywords and the “notes” or “comments” function.