Mary Adams Maverick:
A Texas Pioneer
A curriculum unit that explores the life of a woman on the Texas frontier as it teaches students to use primary source documents

Lesson 2
Identifying Primary Source Documents

Enduring understandings for this unit:

• People who write history use evidence from the past to describe and explain the events, people, and motivations that were part of a particular time period.

• Women’s contributions are often different but just as important to history as men’s contributions.

• Mary Adams Maverick played an important role in Texas history.

Essential questions for this unit:

• How does a historian use a primary source document to understand the past?

• Who was Mary Maverick and why is she important in Texas history?

TEKS:

Grade 4:

3(B) The student will describe the successes and problems of the Republic of Texas
22 (A) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources . . .

Grade 7:

4(A) identify individuals, events and issues during the Republic of Texas . . . including annexation

21(A) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources . . .

Materials:

A. Examples of diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, textbooks, encyclopedias, nonfiction history books
(You may need your librarian to help you find examples of these sources. If you keep a personal diary or journal you might consider displaying pages or passages from that source.)
B. Handout: Different Types of Primary and Secondary Sources

C. Teacher and student copies of Interactive Notes page: Primary and Secondary Sources

D. Letters written by the students for Lesson 1

Objectives:

The students will:

A. Define primary and secondary source documents
B. Learn the difference between primary and secondary sources
C. Identify which of the displayed materials are primary and secondary sources

Anticipatory set (Attention getter):

The teacher will:

1. Display copies of diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, textbooks, encyclopedias, and nonfiction history books and ask: What kinds of information can we get from these different sources? Do you think there is a difference in the type of information the sources provide? Explain.

2. Introduce the lesson by saying:

Today we are going to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source document. These sources are the tools historians use to write history. For these lessons we learn how to distinguish between a primary and secondary source and then apply what we have learned to the diary and memoir of a woman named Mary Adams Maverick. Through her writings we will see what her life was like during the time of the Texas Republic. We will also see how her diary has evolved into an historical account of an important time in Texas history.

Procedure(s):

1. The teacher will:

   A. Allow the students to examine the different types of books that have been assembled for the lesson. Ask: How are these books different or alike? (Accept any reasonable answer.)

   B. Guide the students through the interactive notes page on the definition of primary and secondary sources.
Guidelines for using interactive notes:

1. Duplicate enough copies of the student worksheet Interactive Notes for each student.
2. Using an overhead transparency of the teacher version of the Interactive Notes, the teacher will guide the students through the notes by reading the notes and writing the words that go in the blanks, allowing the students to copy the correct words as they follow along. Only one line of print should be shown at one time to keep the students focused on the discussion. When notes are complete, the teacher asks students to read the notes aloud and the teacher answers any questions that students have about the notes.

B. Using the handout (or transparency): Different Types of Primary and Secondary Sources, explain the difference between the primary source of Mary Maverick’s diary and her memoir, and the secondary source of Paula Marks’s biography of Sam and Mary Maverick and a second historical text.

C. Return the letters the students wrote the day before and ask them if they are a primary or secondary source document using evidence from the materials they covered in this lesson.

Closure: The teacher will ask individual students to explain the difference between a primary and secondary source and give evidence to support their statement.

Evaluation: The students will complete the worksheet provided to identify which of the materials displayed are primary or secondary sources.
A primary source document is a record of an event as it was first described without anyone else’s interpretation (*what they think it means*) or analysis (*taking it apart to find meaning*).

Some examples of primary sources are letters, memoirs, autobiographies, photographs, maps, printed material such as newspapers, or video and sound recordings.

A secondary source document offers an explanation or analysis of a primary source. Some secondary sources use primary sources to support a certain opinion or idea. Some examples of secondary sources are books, encyclopedias, textbooks, and some magazine or newspaper articles.
Primary Sources:

**Letter** – a written or printed communication addressed to a person or organization usually transmitted by mail.

**Diary or Journal** – the personal writings of someone that are a record of the person’s experiences, observations, and feelings.

**Memoir** – a record of events based on the writer’s personal observation. Memoirs usually address a specific time period or event in a person’s life.

**Autobiography** – A book written by a person that tells their life story from birth through the majority of their life.

Secondary Sources:

**Biography** – a written account of another person’s life.

**Nonfiction history** – books written about historical time periods or events based on multiple primary and secondary sources.
Understanding Primary and Secondary Source Documents
(Student copy)

A primary source document is a _______________ of an event as it was first described without anyone _______________ interpretation (what they think it means) or analysis (taking it apart to find meaning).

Some examples of primary sources are letters, _______________, autobiographies, photographs, _______________, printed material such as newspapers, or video and sound recordings.

A secondary source document offers an _______________ or analysis of a primary source. Some secondary sources use primary sources to _______________ a certain opinion or idea. Some examples of secondary sources are non-fiction ________________, encyclopedias, textbooks, and some magazine or _______________ articles.

Primary Sources:

Letter – a written or printed _______________ addressed to a person or organization usually transmitted by _______________.

Diary or Journal – the _______________ writings of someone that are a _______________ of the person’s experiences, observations, and _______________.

Memoir – a record of _______________ based on the writer’s personal observation. Memoirs usually address a _______________ time period or event in a person’s life.

Autobiography – A _______________ written by a person that tells their life story from _______________ through the majority of their life.

Secondary Sources:

Biography – a written _______________ of another person’s life.

Nonfiction history – books written about _______________ time periods or events based on _______________ primary and secondary sources.
Different Types of Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary Sources

A Letter – a written or printed communication addressed to a person or organization usually transmitted by mail.

A Diary or Journal – The personal writings of someone that are a record of the person’s experiences, observations, and feelings.

A Memoir – a record of events based on the writer’s personal observations. Memoirs are often more organized and written more formally than a diary. With the help of her son, Mary Maverick expanded her diary recollections into a book form titled, Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, San Antonio’s First American Woman.
Secondary Sources

A **biography** – is a written account of another person’s life. Dr. Paula Marks, a historian, used the personal letters, diaries, and other primary sources to write a book about Samuel and Mary Maverick.

A **nonfiction history book** – by an author or group of authors to describe or explain an element of history. This book, *Echoes from Women of the Alamo* was written by Gale H. Shiffrin in 1999 to tell the stories of all the women in the Alamo.
Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources  
Student copy

Examine the documents your teacher has assembled for you and decide whether they are primary or secondary sources. Refer to your notes if you need them to help you make a decision. Your work will be graded on your accuracy and completion of the assignment.

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<th>Primary Source Documents</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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