

## Processing Historical Sources

### Distinguishing **Primary** and **Secondary** Historical Sources

Primary sources are those that were created by participants or eyewitnesses to events at the same time they took place. Newspaper articles from the period, as well as diplomatic documents from embassies, laws, acquisitions, or memories of protagonists are such primary sources.

Secondary sources are considered to be, for example, newspaper or magazine articles, books, and motion pictures that refer to the issues under consideration and were created in a later period of events, mainly by historians who studied them.

#### How do we practically distinguish a primary from a secondary source?

We refer to the creator, the bibliographic reference, and pay attention to the publication date of the text. In addition, the title, content, or language of the text (e.g., archaic or demotic) can be helpful.

#### Methods of Writing Related Exercises

At this point, we note that there are two ways to process a source in History, either by quotation or by composition.

In quotation, first the elements of the manual are written and then the references of the sources.

In composition, a historical element from the book is cited, which is usually confirmed by corresponding information from the quote. Information from the book that does not match any of the quote is simply referred to at the corresponding point.

Noteworthy. The composition is the most advantageous way of writing these exercises, as it highlights the student's structured thinking.

#### Steps in Processing Sources

1. Our first step is to read the question carefully so that we can fully understand the requirements.
2. Then, we think about which excerpt from the school book answers the questions of the question. Sometimes we will need to refer to more excerpts from our book.
3. Then, we move on to an equally careful reading of the quote or quotes and try to understand their content in depth, as well as to interpret any unknown words based on the context.
4. Then, we underline in the quotes those elements that match the historical information of the school book.
5. The composition of our answer follows. a) As a prologue, we usually record the one that exists in the lesson from which we draw our historical knowledge. We also mention whether the source is primary or secondary, the author, and the book or text from which it comes. b) The composition process continues in the main section of our answer, using structural words and phrases to ensure the coherence of the text. It should be emphasized that the elements of the quotes can complement or/and oppose the information of the school book. When this happens, we mention the additional or opposing elements of the quote, integrating them into the same paragraph. c) We conclude with our conclusion, which can be drawn, if it exists, from the corresponding chapter of the school book, otherwise, we create our own. Here, general conclusions are mentioned or a brief reference is made to the subsequent developments that concern the specific issue, in order to give the sense of the historical sequence of events.
6. During the final correction, we check if our answer has the correct structure, complete content with recording of all the elements from the book and the source, satisfactory formulation with the use of synonyms and avoiding repetition of the same words, while correcting any spelling and grammatical errors.