

Context Clues: Card 1

The following vocabulary is intended to introduce students to the vehicle(s) through which the *One Man, Two Voices: Peter Feigl's Diary and Testimony* resource is being relayed. Also included for additional context are links to a number of closely related resource materials.

Vocabulary

Clip Any video testimony that is part of the whole.

Close Reading Careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text.

Diary A daily record or book for keeping such a record. Diaries, among the most intimate forms of writing, are a primary source that record innermost thoughts, hopes, fears, and aspirations. They generally are not meant for the public or prying eyes. For a hidden child [in the Holocaust] however, a diary's personal nature presented a serious danger. A detail about one's real family or identity could betray its author as well as his or her rescuer. While not all hidden children were able or allowed to keep diaries, those that exist offer a fascinating glance into the mind and experiences of these youths.¹

Primary Sources First-hand testimony and direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Often these sources, such as diaries, letters, forms, and photographs, are created at the time when the events or conditions are occurring, but primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later.²

Primary sources are real and they are personal; history is humanized through them. Using original sources, students touch the lives of the people about whom history is written. Via a variety of primary sources, students confront two essential facts in studying history. First, the record of historical events reflects the personal, social, political, or economic points of view of the participants. Second, students bring to the sources their own biases, created by their own personal situations and the social environments in which they live. Primary sources force students to realize that any account of an event, no matter how impartially presented it appears to be, is essentially subjective.³

Secondary Sources Generally, they are accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Secondary sources are not evidence, but rather commentary on and discussion of evidence. However, what some define as a secondary source, others define as a tertiary source. Context is everything.⁴

Visual History Testimony A primary source consisting of a videotaped interview between an interviewer and an interviewee subject conducted by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Interviews average just over two hours in length and capture an individual's life story within a broader historical context (i.e. pre-war, wartime, and postwar).

¹ **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** <http://www.ushmm.org/>

² **Primary Sources at Yale:** http://www.yale.edu/collections_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html

³ **National Archives:** <http://www.archives.gov/education/history-in-the-raw.html>

⁴ **Yale University Library:** <http://guides.library.yale.edu/content.php?pid=128822&sid=1187254>

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Related Resources

1. **“Alexandra Zapruder, Editor, *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust.*” Voices on Antisemitism—A Podcast Series. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/antisemitism/voices/transcript/index.php?content=20080327>
2. **“Diaries,” Bibliography. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** <http://www.ushmm.org/research/library/bibliography/?lang=en&content=diaries>
3. **“Hidden Children: Expressions.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia.* United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10006130>
4. **Kain, Patricia. “How To Do a Close Reading.” Writing Center. Harvard University:** <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CloseReading.html>
5. **“Peter Feigl (Chapter 3).” *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust.* Alexandra Zapruder. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002. pp. 63-89.**