

## Secondary Sources in STEM-H Fields

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Secondary sources analyze, evaluate, contextualize, or synthesize evidence. They often give second-hand accounts based on engagement with primary sources.

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### In STEM-H Fields

Secondary sources in STEM-H fields often synthesize or analyze the results from the new studies or research found in primary sources. They often look like tertiary sources from the humanities and social sciences fields.

### Classic Examples

- Quantitative meta-analysis articles that use statistical methods to determine relationships or patterns in the published scholarly literature on a topic
- Systematic review articles that use a research question to select and synthesize published evidence relevant to the question
- Survey articles that summarize an entire field of research
- Scholarly book reviews

### Identification in Context

Sources that are secondary or tertiary in one context might be primary sources in another.

For instance, if your research design called for a content analysis of the coverage of gender roles in high school health textbooks, then these textbooks would be your primary, rather than tertiary, sources.

Likewise, if your research question was “How did 19<sup>th</sup> century newspapers in the American Northeast address the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*?” then book reviews from that era might be one type of primary source you would want to consult, rather than a secondary source.

### Where can I find secondary sources?

Multidiscipline databases (*Academic Search Complete*, *ProQuest Research Library*, *JSTOR*) and subject-specific databases include secondary sources.