



HIS 100 Module Two Activity Template: Primary and Secondary Sources

Non-graded portion:

- The Great Depression and the US Economy

Graded portion:

Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

- Primary sources are original documents or physical objects from the time being studied, like letters or artifacts. Secondary sources analyze, interpret, or critique primary sources, such as history books or articles. Utilizing both is essential for a comprehensive understanding of historical events, as primary sources offer direct insight, while secondary sources provide context and analysis.

Explain why it is essential to consult various sources when conducting historical research. Include specific details and examples.

- Consulting various sources in historical research is crucial to gain a nuanced understanding of the past. Different sources can provide diverse perspectives, ensuring a more balanced and comprehensive view of historical events. For instance, while official documents or political treaties might offer insights into governmental actions or international relations, personal diaries, letters, and oral histories can reveal individuals' everyday experiences and sentiments during the same period. Additionally, cross-referencing multiple sources helps verify facts, reducing the risk of bias and inaccuracies. For example, studying both Western and local accounts of colonial periods can help researchers understand colonialism's complex dynamics and impacts, highlighting differing narratives and experiences. This methodological diversity strengthens historical analysis and interpretation, promoting a richer, more accurate representation of the past.

Identify one **primary** source that would help investigate your research question (include the title, author, and link to the source).

- Title: Fireside Chat on the Banking Crisis
- Author: National Archives NextGen Catalog.
- Link: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/197302>

Identify one **secondary** source that would help investigate your research question (include the title, author, and link to the source).

- Title: Anxious Depositors
- Author: DocsTeach
- Link: <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/anxious-depositors>



Choose a current event related to the subject of your historical research question and explain how they are connected.

- The current economic landscape, characterized by a predicted slowdown in growth, rising consumer debt, and concerns over inflation, mirrors some of the conditions that prefaced The Great Depression, albeit in a less severe form. Today, the U.S. faces a below-trend economic expansion, with real GDP growth forecasted at 0.7% for 2024, down from 2.8% in 2023. This slowdown is attributed to a deceleration in consumer spending and business investment amid higher interest rates, alongside a potential fiscal drag (Foster-McGregor et al., 2012).

The current conditions, while not as dire as The Great Depression, highlight the importance of understanding historical economic crises to better navigate present-day challenges. The Great Depression taught us the critical role of consumer confidence, fiscal policy, and government intervention in stabilizing the economy. Today's economic trends, such as the deceleration in growth and weakening consumer sentiment despite low unemployment and easing inflation, reflect the complex interplay of economic forces that can influence the broader economy. By drawing parallels between past and present, we can appreciate the necessity of vigilant economic policies and the potential consequences of ignoring signs of financial distress.

References:

Foster-McGregor, N., Hanzl-Weiss, D., Leitner, S. M., Leitner, S., Rabemiafara, N., Sanoussi, F., Stehrer, R., & Ward, T. (2012). *Sectoral Employment Effects of Economic Downturns* (Research Report 379). wiiw Research Report. <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/204151>

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