

Searching for Primary Sources

WRT 205

In academic conversations, oftentimes we get information secondhand. As Harris describes in his chapter, “Forwarding,” academics often write to a *third reader*, as in an email forward, rather than a reply. It’s important that you are able to assess the bias of this secondhand information you are given. Sometimes, we want to see for ourselves what the original information was. Thus, we turn to primary sources in order to make our own assessment of the matter at hand.

Choose a **moment or quote** from one text that you have read in our class (or in your research) that sparked a specific question for you. Look for a claim that an author made, or a detail that was mentioned, that you were curious about.

Copy **the quote** or record the information here:

(ex) Klein critiques Friedman’s belief that: “Once a crisis has struck, [...] it is crucial to act swiftly, to impose rapid and irreversible change, before [...] society slips back into the “tyranny of the status quo.” (7)

What is **your question** about this claim or detail?

(ex) Though Klein is against this and makes it sound terrible, what were Friedman’s reasons for this belief? Were any of his reasons good reasons?

What **sources** are **cited by the author**, or what sources does the author draw upon, to support this claim? Look in the author’s **references** or notes, if needed, and list them here. Look especially, for any **primary** sources she draws upon.

(ex) *Tyranny and the Status Quo* by Milton and Rose Freidman, *Capitalism and Freedom* by Milton Friedman, a few newspaper articles by Friedman are listed in her notes

Now it’s time to do some **searching**. If the author listed primary sources, start by looking these up in the library. Remember, if we don’t have it in our library, you can use “Interlibrary Loan,” which is simple and quick. If the author used secondary sources, you may have to locate some of these in order to track down the original primary sources (just like detective work). When you find some primary sources, list them in the chart below—and by skimming them over, assess the uses and limits of each. How could each one help you answer your question?

Primary sources I found	Uses/Limits of each
<i>Capitalism and Freedom</i> by Milton Friedman	<i>Tyranny</i> was checked out, so I looked at this. Intro was readable, historical, looks somewhat difficult after the intro because of political and economic jargon, and because it’s from 1980...Friedman explains his rationale in detail in the book---if I can’t get the other book, this will help me to understand where Friedman was coming from (it was written only a few years earlier than <i>Tyranny</i>).

