

How do we know what happened?

The Great Fire of London happened in 1666, more than 350 years ago. This means there's no one alive today who can tell us what it was like. Luckily, there are other ways of finding out what happened in the past.



In pairs, try to come up with three things that you think could tell us about life in the past. For each one, write a few words explaining why it would be useful. The first one has been done for you.

1	2	3
<hr/> <i>A newspaper</i> <hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
This is useful because	This is useful because	This is useful because
<i>It tells us what happened and how people found out.</i>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

When historians want to find out more about the past, they use sources. Sources come in lots of different forms, and contain evidence that helps us understand what happened.

Primary sources are things from the time the events took place.

Secondary sources are made after the events have taken place by someone who wasn't there.

Both **primary** and **secondary** sources are important and can be very useful to historians who know how to use them.

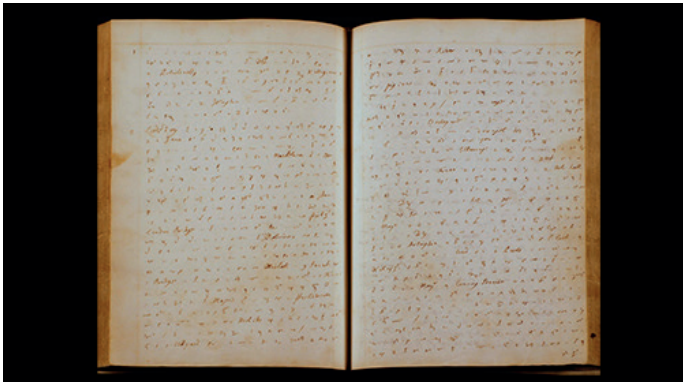
A **historian** is someone who studies the past.

Evidence is the information which tells us what happened in the past.

How do we know what happened?



Here are some examples of sources. See if you can decide which ones are primary and which ones are secondary. For each one, write what you think it might tell us about the Great Fire of London. One has been done for you.



Samuel Pepys's diary

primary source / secondary source

This could tell us



A website about the Great Fire

primary source / secondary source

This could tell us



A bucket used during the fire

primary source / secondary source

This could tell us

What kinds of tools were used to fight the Great Fire.
