**Source work – Value and Limitations**

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| Type of source | Audience | Value | Limitations | Purpose |
| Historians | Depends on the textStudents or people with an interest in the topicTend to be academicsOther historians | To informExpert knowledgeReferenced/evidencedGood coverage of the topicHindsight | Biased/opinionatedHindsight???Non-contemporaryCan be outdatedSelected bias – by selection | To informTo gain academic superiorityTo make money |
| Biographers | People interested in the topic/person. | Well-researchedDetailed knowledge of the topic.Can be close to subject if contemporary. | Can be biased (positive or negative way)Can be limited in contentAn interpretation – may just focus on one aspect of their life.Can be to involved/emotional | To informMake moneyJustification for events/roles/decisions. |
| Autobiography | Yourself?People interested in the topic/person. | Perspective – one persons view of events.InterestingGives insider informationNot open to bias | Fallibility of memory.Limited perspective | To justify/glorify/exaggerate etcTo inform????? |
| Private letters | The recipient | PersonalGives information/perspectiveContemporary response to eventsEmotional responseCan sometimes express motive/points of view of the time. | Personal view rather than politicalOpinions can changeCan be limited due to tone, quality of language and expression.Can be open to interpretation - not aware of context. | To informTo communicate |
| Diaries | PersonalCan be kept to publish | PersonalCan give opinions/emotions/Perspectives.Contemporary | Personal opinionContemporaryOffers one perspective | To reflect$$$ |
| Memoirs (to be published) | Public (depending on topic)Formal and Informal  | Personal opinion/viewsPublished in hindsight | Adapted in hindsight?Might not show public opinionGlorification of an event or individual | To inform; to persuade$$$ |
| Newspapers, TV and radio reports | General Public; educated and uneducated | Contemporary Offers expert views?Reflects public opinion | Influenced by other factors- politicsBrief overview- not much detailTypically one-sidedBiased/ OpinionatedTries to appeal to specific audience | To inform a large number of people about events/ key thingsTo sell |
| Novels/poems | Someone interested in the 'topic'  | Offers insight into emotional responsesPersonal opinionCan be Contemporary | Personal OpinionPolitically influencedCan no the written in Contemporary climate | To entertain To offer a different perspective$$$ |
| Statistics | Government departments.Educated public with a keen interest in the relevant topic.Historians looking to write a book/article etc. | Facilitates comparisons.Offers insight into continuity and change over time.Provides insight into correlations between factors/indicators.Offers insight into aspects of a nation such as growth and decline.Objective facts, not up to interpretation. | Focuses on a specific location or time period Could suggest an incorrect correlation as there can be other factors not included in some sets of statistics Could be purposely altered in order to appeal to a specific purpose Data collection limitations | Inform audience of relevant aspects of a topic, such as population growth.Allows statistics measuring similar things to be compared between different countries, cities, etc. Persuade audience to your point of view (propoganda) |
| Photographs | General public, almost anyone | Offers insight to first hand situations on a particular place, or people's immediate response May offer information on a specific environment  | Might leave out or ignore the bigger picture (quite literally in this case).Might be staged.Might reflect the purpose of the photographer rather than the reality of the situation. | Make $$.Convey a propaganda message.To preserve a memory  |
| Cartoons | The general public,Readers of a specific magazine or cartoon  | Can inform public opinion, artists often respond to popular views.Can portray government's line when there is censorshipGives a visual representation |  Over-exaggerated AmbiguousMisinterpreted  | To entertain; Can be a form of protest  |
| Paintings | Art enthusiasts,Décor for the masses  | Can reflect culture /societal views at the time Gives a particular perspective  | Only gives one opinion and can be confusing/misleadingCompletely bias/individualistic interpretation Often commissioned  | Can be used to express an idea.To make a political/ethical pointTo commemorate/ glorify/raise awarenessTo shock |
| Speeches | General Public (at the time)People interested in the topic | May reveal motives of speech giverSays what the public knew at the time | Context of words are missing (how they are said, gestures)One sided, used to promote what the speech giver wants^May ignore the topic they are talking (dodging questions)May reveal the motives of the speech giver that the speech giver wants to reveal | Revels motives that they want to revealTo inform public of information that the speech giver wants to giveTo persuade/justifyPropaganda purposes |
| Government records and documents | Educated/interested peoplePeople working internally People working externally | Can reveal the motivesCan reveal the situation of a country | Can be skewed, altered for the benefit of the governmentFiles that are too sensitive can be destroyedMight not show public opinion | Communication internallyDiplomatic CommunicationProvide statisticsJustify actionsExplain actions |