Check your learning!
Scenario

Your professor has the class meet in the Special Collections section of the library.

There are books and pieces of paper spread out on a big desk.

He offers a bonus mark to anyone who can correctly identify different primary and secondary source materials.
On the desk in front of you can see:

• A book by a historian on the fall of the Roman Empire
• A photograph taken at Stalingrad, c. 1943
• A speech delivered by Barack Obama
• The diary of Sir Isaac Brock
• An academic journal on history
• A novel by Herman Melville
• A commentary on Plato’s Republic
Which are the primary sources?

- A. The speech delivered by Barack Obama
- B. An academic journal on history
- C. The photograph taken at Stalingrad, c. 1943
- D. The diary of Sir Isaac Brock
- E. Options A, C, and D.

Actually, since academic journal articles comment on events that have already happened they are secondary sources.

Correct! These sources emerge from an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event.
Which are the secondary sources?

A. The book on the fall of the Roman Empire
B. An academic journal on history
C. The novel by Herman Melville
D. The commentary on Plato's Republic
F. Options A, B, D

Actually, a novel is an original artistic work of an author so it is a primary source.

Correct! The book, academic journal, and commentary are sources comment on events that have already happened so they are secondary sources.
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