Primary Sources:
Primary sources are the research results written and published by the original researcher. Primary sources are usually published in academic research journals or books. For example, the research paper that contains authentic research data, with a specific research design, the data analysis and conclusions.

Secondary Sources:
Secondary sources refer to review or evaluation of primary research commonly found in textbooks, journals, and encyclopedia. According to our textbook, the definition of a secondary source is a “publication in which the author reports on research that others have carried out, on a theory that others have developed, or on experiences that others have had” (p. 65). In other words, the author of a secondary source is reporting on what someone else thinks or did. There are advantages and disadvantages of secondary sources which your author discusses quite nicely!

There are two types of secondary sources: (1) primary sources analyses, and (2) professional reviews. Visually, this can be presented as:

![Diagram of Secondary Sources]

Primary Source Analyses. A primary source analysis is a synthesis of research about a particular topic. Let’s say that a researcher decides to conduct a primary source analysis about cooperative learning in high school mathematics courses. The researcher would not actually conduct her own study about cooperative learning; rather, she would do a very thorough and deliberate search of the all of the appropriate databases to locate primary research that others have conducted. Then she would read all of the primary studies and summarize the overall findings in a very systematic manner. She could choose a quantitative (vote counting, chi-square test, or meta-analysis) or qualitative approach (exploratory case study method) to analyze the primary studies.
At this point of our research studies, it is not so important that you understand the specific methods and details of each of these approaches. It is important that you know a primary source analysis when you see one! Many primary source analyses use one of the quantitative approaches and rely heavily on statistical methods - which makes them a little more challenging - and unfortunately causes many folks to shy away from reading them. **Meta-analysis** is a very common primary source analysis, and that is why it is included as a vocabulary and concept term.

**Professional Reviews.** Professional reviews are a very popular kind of primary source analysis. The primary reason that they are so popular is because they do not use technical or statistical language which makes them very easy to read. Buyer Beware!

“*Professional reviews generally lack the rigor of a good primary source analysis, so you need to consider whether the reviewer's conclusions and recommendations are warranted. Also, some professional reviews are written by individuals with limited experience in the conduct or interpretation of research*” (p. 76). A professional review that is published in a well-respected peer-reviewed scholarly journal and/or written by a renown expert is considerably more likely to a quality review.

**Examples of secondary source analyses.** In our textbook, authors make it very easy for us to learn more about secondary source analyses by providing us with examples of each at the end of the chapter. Although, skimming through these articles to get a sense of the similarities and differences is probably sufficient, do take the time to read the researchers’ comments that precedes each article. They provide interesting insights and reflections about the researchers’ work.