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# Information Types & Characteristics

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## Factual vs. Analytical

### Factual Information

"Just the facts"

Objective

Real

"Something that actually exists; reality; truth,"  
*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*

#### Examples of factual questions:

- "What is the temperature in Denver?"
- "Who won the Academy Award for best actor in 1993?"
- "What is the distance in miles between Cleveland and Chicago?"
- "How many cups are in a gallon?"

#### Examples of sources that contain factual information:

- Dictionaries
- Atlases
- Handbooks
- Directories

### Analytical Information

Interpretations

Analysis

Criticism

analyze- "to examine critically, so as to bring out the essential elements or give the essence of." *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*.

#### Examples of questions requiring analytical information:

- "What are the themes in Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*?"
- "What were the contributing factors to the increase of drug use in the 1960's?"
- "What are the related effects for two-career marriages and the traditional family structure?"

#### Examples of sources that contain analytical information:

- Books
- Articles in journals
- Subject Encyclopedias

# Objective vs. Subjective

## Objective Information

Without Bias

Non-judgmental

"not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudices; based on facts," *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*.

### Examples of objective information needs:

- Chronology of the Feminist movement
- The eight stages of development according to Erik Erikson
- A list of OSHA guidelines for restaurant employees

### Examples of sources that contain objective information:

- Encyclopedias
- Subject Dictionaries

## Subjective Information

Opinions

Personal viewpoints

Evaluations

Existing in the mind

### Examples of subjective information needs:

- Criticism of Eugene O'Neill's play "A Moon for the Misbegotten."
- Evaluation of a course based on class comments.
- Book review or movie reviews.

### Examples of sources that may contain subjective information:

- Books
- Periodicals
- Classmates, Instructors, Friends, etc.
- Media
- Internet

# Primary vs. Secondary

## Primary Information

Information in its original form

Not translated by anyone else

Has not been published elsewhere

### Examples of primary information needs:

- Explanation or instructions from an employer or teacher
- An eyewitness account of a house fire
- A research article on the discovery of a new virus
- Georgia O'Keefe's interpretation of a flower

### Examples of primary information sources:

- Research journals
- Firsthand accounts; Newspapers or television
- Diaries
- Original artwork

## Secondary Information

Repackaged

Examination, restatement or interpretation of primary information

Tools that lead to primary sources

### Examples of secondary information needs:

- Notes borrowed from a classmate for a missed class
- An explanation of "The Diary of Anne Frank"
- A bibliography on the letters of Ernest Hemingway
- An account of the journey of Lewis and Clark

### Examples of secondary information sources:

- Bibliography
- Documentary
- Review Articles