In research projects you may need to use primary sources, secondary sources, or (usually) both.

**Primary sources** were either created at the same time as the events which you are studying or created at a later date by someone who was there at the time. They give direct evidence about an event. Primary sources can be photos, legal documents, creative writing, statistical data, maps, art, official reports, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, interviews, audio or video recordings, surveys, statistics, speeches, letters, diaries, objects, and more.

**Secondary sources** describe, evaluate, analyse or interpret an event. They are written by people who did not play a direct part in the event they describe, and are usually based on the author’s interpretation of primary sources. Examples include history books and articles, reviews, and encyclopaedias.

To find the original copies of most primary sources you will need to visit a library or archive, but luckily many primary sources can now be accessed online. The Bodleian History Faculty Library has a full list of recommended portals to access primary sources [here](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/history/library/), but many of these sites require a subscription and can only be accessed in a library.

To help you get started with your research, OxLibris has collected some suggestions for online resources that might help with EPQs or A-Level History coursework. The first section includes resources you can access anywhere. Subscription resources to use in a library are in the second section. This is just a small selection of the digital resources available. For personalised help with your research, ask a librarian.

### Free-to-access resources:

#### Resources for British History

- **The British Library:** [https://www.bl.uk/learning/online-resources](https://www.bl.uk/learning/online-resources)
  A huge range of digitised sources, online exhibitions and essays written by experts on topics including Asians in Britain (1858–1950), The Abolition of Slavery, Georgian Britain, Magna Carta, Children's Games, Medieval Social History, Women's Suffrage, Holocaust testimonies, West India Regiments, Windrush Stories and more.

- **Institute for Historical Research:** [https://www.history.ac.uk/digital/resources](https://www.history.ac.uk/digital/resources)
  Links to several online resources including History of Parliament Online, Reviews in History (reviews of major books), Department Store catalogues in the First World War (giving an insight into fashion and consumption) and more.

- **A Vision of Britain Through Time:** [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/index.jsp](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/index.jsp)
  This website includes historical maps, statistical trends and historical descriptions for places in Britain.

- **British History Online:** [https://www.british-history.ac.uk/](https://www.british-history.ac.uk/)
  A digital library of key printed primary and secondary sources for the history of Britain and Ireland, focusing on the period from 1300 to 1800. Search by period, subject, or place.

- **Connected History Sources, 1500–1900:** [https://www.connectedhistories.org/](https://www.connectedhistories.org/)
  A range of digital resources relating to early modern and 19th-century Britain, allowing keyword searches and searches by date and person. There are also research guides on specific themes to help you.

- **The National Archives:** [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/)
  The UK National Archives has a large collection of lesson plans for teachers based on primary sources, but many of these are also useful for students to read through and include suggestions on primary sources to use for particular topics.
  A website featuring digitised papers of the Cabinet of the British Government from 1915-1979. You can browse for papers by themes such as Health, Colonies and Empire and the Criminal Justice System.

- **Proceedings of the Old Bailey**: [https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/](https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/)

- **Lest We Forget**: [https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/home](https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/home)
  A collection of material and information relating to the First World War, including photographs, diaries and images of objects such as medals.

- **International Encyclopaedia of the First World War**: [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/home/](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/home/)
  An encyclopaedia of terms relating to the First World War. You can search by keyword and also browse by themes such as Home Front and Post-War.

- **The John Johnson Collection**: [http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do](http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do)
  Primary sources from the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera at the Bodleian Libraries, exploring everyday life in Britain from the 1700s to the early 1900s. Categories include 19th-century Entertainment, Popular Prints, Crimes, Murders and Executions, and Advertising.

- **British Cartoon Archive**: [https://www.cartoons.ac.uk/](https://www.cartoons.ac.uk/)
  Over 200,000 British cartoons, dating from 1904 onwards.

- **‘Keywords’ section on the TIDE (Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c.1550-1700) website**: [www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home](http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home)
  An encyclopaedia of words relating to the experience of being a ‘stranger’ in 16th and 17th-century England, and the perception of other races, nations, cultures and religions.

  Primary and secondary texts on Great Britain in the age of Victoria (1837–1901), covering areas such as Political History and Gender Matters.

- **LSE Suffrage Website**: [http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/exhibitions/suffrage18](http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/exhibitions/suffrage18)
  A website of online resources, including podcasts and videos, which focus on the 2018 centenary of women’s right to vote.

**Resources for History in Britain and beyond:**

- **Spartacus Educational**: [https://spartacus-educational.com/](https://spartacus-educational.com/)
  An online encyclopaedia for many topics in British, US, Russian, German, Women’s and Black history. A useful starting point as topic pages include several suggested primary sources for further research.

- **Internet History Sourcebooks**: [https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/](https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/)
  A very extensive collection of primary sources including ancient, medieval, and modern collections. There are also thematic collections including Jewish, Indian, East Asian, Islamic, Medieval Music, Women’s and LGBTQ+ history. Bibliographies are available for some medieval and LGBTQ+ topics.

- **Europeana Collections**: [https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en](https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en)
  A collection of artworks, artefacts, books, films and music from museums, galleries, libraries and archives all over Europe, searchable by keyword.

- **EuroDocs: Online Sources for European History**: [https://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page](https://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)
Links to transcriptions, facsimiles or translations of European primary historical documents, as well as video and sound files and photographs.

  The most comprehensive collection of Irish documentary material in the world, essential for research on Irish history and culture.

- **The Avalon Project:** [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/)
  Yale Law School created this digital library for documents related to law, history, and diplomacy. These are arranged by century and include the full text of famous items like the Magna Carta, US Bill of Rights, and 9/11 Commission Report, as well as lesser-known legal documents. It also links to the Nuremburg Trials Collection and DIANA, an online human rights archive.

- **The LIFE Magazine Archive:** [http://images.google.com/hosted/life](http://images.google.com/hosted/life)
  Search millions of photographs from US magazine LIFE, from the 1860s to the present day.

- **United States National Archives:** [https://www.archives.gov/education/research/primary-sources](https://www.archives.gov/education/research/primary-sources)
  Thousands of primary sources relating to all aspects of American history to the present day.

- **Reviews in History:** [https://reviews.history.ac.uk/](https://reviews.history.ac.uk/)
  Free e-journal publishing weekly reviews of important history books. It is useful to keyword search on your topic to find recent books and create a reading list and compare secondary sources on a topic.

- **The Smithsonian Learning Lab:** [https://learninglab.si.edu/](https://learninglab.si.edu/)
  Browse more than 2 million images, recordings, and texts from 19 US museums.

- **Oxford University Faculty of History resources for schools:** [https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/resources-schools](https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/resources-schools)
  The website features worksheets, questions and resources relevant to both British and non-British history, with topics including the Partition of India and the English Invasion of Ireland.

- **BBC In Our Time: History:** [https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01dh5yq](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01dh5yq)
  Podcasts on a range of historical topics, from Marie Antoinette to the Sikh Empire

- **Gresham College: History:** [https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/?subject=history](https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/?subject=history)
  Videos of lectures on a range of historical topics.

**Other:**

- **Cambridge History Virtual Classroom:** [https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/prospective-undergrads/virtual-classroom](https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/prospective-undergrads/virtual-classroom)
  Information and interactive exercises to help you develop your interests and skills as a historian.

**Paid and subscription resources:**

(Subscription resources will be available to access during an OxLibris session.)

- **JSTOR:** [https://www.jstor.org/](https://www.jstor.org/)
  JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources across 75 disciplines. Your school or public library may have access, or you can use JSTOR in a university library. You can also register for a free account and read up to 6 articles per month. JSTOR has some primary source collections, including the struggle for freedom in southern Africa, and 19th-century British pamphlets. However, it is most useful for accessing secondary sources, particularly academic articles and book reviews.
- **Oxfordshire County Libraries:** [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online/z-list](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online/z-list)
  There is a range of subscription resources which you can access in your local public library, including the British Newspapers Archive (1800s–1999) and Family History sites. You can also access over 15 million academic articles in public libraries through [www.accesstoresearch.org.uk/](http://www.accesstoresearch.org.uk/)

- **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography:** [https://www.oxforddnb.com/](https://www.oxforddnb.com/)
  Over 60,000 biographies and 11,000 portraits of significant people in British history. You can access this in libraries or at home using a public libraries card.

- **ProQuest:** [https://www.proquest.com/libraries/academic/primary-sources/](https://www.proquest.com/libraries/academic/primary-sources/)
  ProQuest is a gateway to millions of primary sources on every topic. Collections include Historical Newspapers, the Vogue Archive, WWI trench journals, Queen Victoria’s journals and much more, but access arrangements vary for the different topics. If you cannot access a site at home, ask a librarian for advice as many can be accessed in public and university libraries.

- **British and Irish Women’s letters and diaries 1500–1950:** [https://bwl2.alexanderstreet.com/](https://bwl2.alexanderstreet.com/)
  This subscription resource features the digitised diaries and letters of around 500 women, including well-known figures such as Mary Wollstonecraft. It can be keyword searched, or you can search for letters and diaries according to themes such as historical events, and where the person lived.

- **The British Newspapers Archive:** [https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/](https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/)
  The BNA contains 40 million newspaper pages from the 1800s until 1999. Filter searches by time period, region or place or publication. Only available in libraries.

- **The First World War:** [http://www.firstworldwar.amdigital.co.uk/](http://www.firstworldwar.amdigital.co.uk/)
  This subscription resource brings together primary sources for the study of the Great War according to theme. It includes maps, audio-visual resources such as recordings of veterans, and digitised documents.

- **Cambridge Histories:** [https://www.cambridge.org/core/what-we-publish/collections/cambridge-histories](https://www.cambridge.org/core/what-we-publish/collections/cambridge-histories)
  Online version of the popular series of 350 books on a wide range of historical subjects.

- **The National Archives:** [https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/](https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/)
  There are many items from the UK National Archives’ vast collections which can be viewed and downloaded online, for a fee. You can keyword search to find relevant documents, making sure that the ‘Available to download from The National Archives’ box is checked to show only online items.

- **Mass Observation Online:** [http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk](http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk)
  Fascinating social history sources for Britain from 1937–67 on topics including consumerism, fashion, sex, the family, and attitudes to war, politics and America, Russia and Europe. Available in university libraries.

- **The Times Newspaper Archive:** [https://www.thetimes.co.uk/archive/](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/archive/)
  Explore 200 years of history as it appeared in the pages of The Times, from 1785 to 1985.