Primary source materials include original documents and records of individuals, organizations and institutions directly related to a topic in time (contemporary newspaper reports, correspondence, diaries) or through participation (speeches, interviews, oral histories, etc.). Primary sources are original, unedited material (words, images, objects) which have not yet been analyzed, interpreted, or commented on.

Finding primary source material using Library of Congress terms:

The Library of Congress (and de facto, most North American libraries) uses several different terms to indicate primary source material in a catalog’s bibliographic record. This term is usually added as the last element of a formal subject heading. Therefore, in a subject search or a keyword search, to find primary sources, you can use a combination of your topic’s keywords or subject headings and any of these LC terms:

- Archives
- Caricatures and cartoons
- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Interviews
- Law and legislation [i.e. the texts of laws & statutes]
- Notebooks, sketchbooks, etc.
- Pamphlets
- Personal narratives
- Photographs [the actual photographs, not reproductions]
- Pictorial works
- Sources
- Newspapers
Examples:

key word search:
  diplomats soviet diaries

subject browse search:
  Soviet Union—History—1917- --Sources
  Soviet Union—History—1925-1953—Pictorial works
  Soviet Union—History—1953-1985—Sources
  Czech Republic—Foreign relations—Russia (Federation)—Sources
  Czech Republic—Politics and government—1993- --Sources
  World War, 1939-1945—Personal narratives, Czech

- Newspapers in English published in the Soviet Union [Moscow News]
- Publications which translate Russian primary sources into English:
  - newspaper articles [Current Digest of the Soviet Press and Post-Soviet Press]
  - press releases, transcripts of speeches from radio, television, etc. [FBIS Daily Report Soviet Union, WorldNewsConnection database]
- Other compilations of primary source documents, such as:
  - USSR Documents, 1987- [annual] includes translations of important speeches, new laws, etc. on politics, the party, media, religion, nationalities, foreign policy, health issues, etc.]
  - Documents of Soviet History [8v. covering 1917-1949]
  - USSR Calendar of Events, 1987-1991
- Material in North American archives
  - Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian & East European Culture [Columbia University Libraries]
- Archival collections on microfilm [documents primarily in English]
- Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the United States and Russia (and the Soviet Union) and Other States, 1910-1944. 38 reels
- Records of the US Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of the Russian Zone (East Germany) 1950-1954. 14 reels
- The Soviet Union: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, part II, 1946-1953. 7 reels
- Soviet Union: State Department Intelligence and Research Reports. 1950-1961
- Soviet Union Political Reports 1917-1970. 12v.[reports of British diplomats based in Moscow and St. Petersburg]

- Films from or about a particular era, in this case the Khrushchev-Brezhnev eras [Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears, Vanished Empire, The Cranes Are Flying, The Fate of a Man, Ballad of a Soldier, etc.]
- Collections of Soviet posters from all eras (reprints). [keyword search in our online catalog using posters and soviet or posters and Russia*]