

Primary Source Documents

Note: Primary documents can be a valuable resource in a reference work, but can add considerable time and expense to a project. If primary documents are scheduled to be included in your book, we will work with you to ease these complications. Please check with your editor to see if primary documents are expected. Do not wait until the end of your project to begin work on primary documents!

What is a Primary Source Document?

A primary source document is a stand-alone text, such as:

- A document that was written by someone who witnessed or experienced an event or condition at the time when it occurred
- A memoir, interview, or oral history that was recorded after an event
- Relevant excerpts from books, articles, letters, diaries, pamphlets, or advertisements
- Government documents such as court rulings, court records, proclamations, government publications, and transcripts of speeches made by government officials

Primary source documents should be used to enhance the text, increase reader interest, and provide users with a basis for research.

How do I Plan to Include Them?

When considering which documents to include, pay attention to the distribution of documents within the book, the diversity of document types and lengths, and general consistency of the documents across all entries, chapters, and volumes of your book.

As you discuss with your acquisitions or development editor which primary source documents will be included in your book, please be aware that many documents have copyright restrictions (see [Permissions](#)).

Given the expense and lengthy time frame involved with acquiring text and primary document permissions, we strongly advise that you

- Identify documents to use very early in the process
- Use primary documents that are within the public domain whenever possible
- Begin to acquire permissions as soon as documents with copyright restrictions are identified.

All necessary permissions must be submitted with your manuscript before it will be accepted for production.

Where Should Primary Sources Go?

Depending on the guidelines for your project, primary documents might appear within entries or chapters, between reference entries, or in a specific section dedicated to documents. Depending on their size, some documents might be placed in a sidebar or text box.

Preparing Primary Documents for Your Project

Use the following checklist to ensure your primary documents are ready for publication:

- ✓ The document has a heading, such as the document's actual title, or a descriptive heading that succinctly describes the document and gives a date
Example:
"No Great Day of Hope for Ireland":
William Gladstone's Speech in the Commons Proposing
Irish Home Rule (1886).
- ✓ After the title, include a brief introduction written by you (or your contributing author). The intro should:
 - Place the document in context for your book
 - Clearly describe the document (or particular passage), as well as its type, creator, date, and importance to your topic
 - Warn readers about potentially offensive language or subject matter, such as expletives, racial slurs, and the like (see **Welcome Packet**), if applicable
- ✓ The document's text is included in plain text (not a PDF, image, or other non-editable version) following the heading and introduction.
- ✓ If the document contains potentially offensive language, please discuss with your editor whether certain terms need to be redacted with the use of asterisks, or if a warning in the introduction will suffice.
- ✓ If you wish to include an excerpt from a larger body of text, include only what you want us to publish.

- When looking for an excerpt, consider what would be an interesting and coherent read, as well as what will fit within your word count limits.
 - Mark cuts with ellipses.
 - Be careful to not change the intention of a document with your cuts.
- ✓ All documents must have a full source citation, using the bibliographic style used in the manuscript, at the end of the document. If a document comes from a pre-1923 publication (and is thus in the public domain), use that source, or the original, not a later publication that will likely be under copyright. While the full citation is what will be published in your book, it can also be helpful for you to list the source that *you* obtained the document from (such as a web site or a printed document collection)— this is important since document texts can vary from source to source (especially when translations are involved), and doing so helps us assess permissions.
 - ✓ Depending on your project guidelines and editor’s preference, include each document embedded in an entry or chapter, or as a separate file that’s clearly named. For some projects, documents should have “see also” cross-references; discuss this with your editor. (See **Main Text** for more details about cross referencing.)
 - ✓ If you have any release forms, email correspondence, text files, etc. that indicate document permissions, required credit lines, or similar, be sure to forward those along to your editor, as well.

Sample Primary Document (excerpt)

Platt Amendment, 1901

Although the majority of delegates at the Cuban Constitutional Convention initially rejected the Platt Amendment, they eventually caved under pressure from the United States, understanding that rejecting the Amendment would only prolong U.S. rule in Cuba. Until its abrogation in 1934, the Platt Amendment allowed the United States to intervene in Cuba, among other restrictions on its sovereignty, which produced four major U.S. military interventions in the first three decades of the Cuban republic.

Whereas the Congress of the United States of America, by an Act approved March 2, 1901, provided as follows:

Provided further, That in fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April twentieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, entitled "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the

Introduction
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United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect," the President is hereby authorized to "leave the government and control of the island of Cuba to its people" so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution which, either as a part thereof or in an ordinance appended thereto, shall define the future relations of the United States with Cuba, substantially as follows:

"I. That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgement in or control over any portion of said island."

"II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate."

"III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba."

"IV. That all Acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected."

(...)

"VIII. That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States."

Source: *Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining Their Future Relations as Contained in the Act of Congress.* Approved March 2, 1901, signed May 22, 1903; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 2006, RG 11, National Archives.

Public Domain Info

Public Domain

“Public Domain” refers to content for which there is no copyright owner, including the following:

- U.S. federal government documents created in the course of governmental duty. (But, documents from governments other than U.S. should be double checked.)
- Court transcripts.
- Any works published in the United States prior to December 31, 1922. Works published after, whose copyright was properly renewed, will be protected until at least 2019.
- Works published in other countries follow the copyright laws of that country, and should be researched.
- Non-governmental organizations, such as the UN, usually maintain copyright and require permission.

Full and up-to-date information about copyright can be obtained at the United States Copyright Office website, www.copyright.gov.

The following chart is helpful in determining whether a text is public domain:
<http://copyright.cornell.edu/resources/publicdomain.cfm>

Although all public domain excerpts and documents can be used freely without permission, they still need proper citations.

If you have further questions about the copyright status of a particular work, please query your acquisitions editor or transmitter.

Permissions FAQs

Can I use a modern translation of an older public domain document?

While the original document may be public domain, the translator would hold rights to the translation. You’ll either need to obtain permission for the translation, or use a public domain translation. If you translate the document yourself, please be sure to indicate that in your citation.

When should I start the permissions process?

As soon as possible. Securing permissions takes time (often months); if left until after the manuscript is complete, you risk delaying publication as well as the possibility of not being able to include quoted text and primary documents.

What are the minimum permission grant standards?

Discuss with your editor whether it is the author or publisher's responsibility to acquire permissions.

For author's responsibility:

It is the author's responsibility to obtain all necessary rights and permissions for permissionable text used in the manuscript, including payment of fees (note that requests for copies of books are included as "fees").

Ideally, you should obtain rights using the following language:
world rights, in all languages, in all media, for all editions.

If these rights are too expensive or not available, ask your editor if we could accept permissions under the following terms:

World territory, English language; print and e-book formats, with a combined "print run" of 4500.

We MUST have both print and e-book rights. If e-book rights are unavailable, then the excerpt or document in question must be dropped from the text.

Most rightsholders will require you to fill out their forms. If you have any questions, or if a rightsholder asks for your publisher's form instead, please contact your acquisitions editor.

For publisher's responsibility:

Please identify potential primary documents very early in your project. Our permissions team will assist you with narrowing down a list. Please note that the publisher will obtain permissions (including paying fees), but also retains the right to drop any document for which permission is difficult or too expensive. The author/editor is still responsible for providing an excerpt in plain text format.

Can I claim fair use for a primary document?

No. The very nature of primary documents as stand-alone items that are not fully integrated into the main text disqualifies them from being considered fair use.

What if I cannot find the rightsholder, or the rightsholder does not respond?

We cannot include the document.