



Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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TOPIC 1.2. COMPARING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

The following sources relate to the Nazi occupation of Poland on September 1, 1939. . The first is a primary source (an eyewitness account), the second is secondary (written by someone who was not present), and the third contains primary sources with commentary:

1. Address by Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Reich, before the Reichstag, September 1, 1939
URL: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/gp2.htm>
2. The Occupation of Poland (ARC)
URL: <http://www.deathcamps.org/occupation/>
3. The Nazi Occupation of Poland (Eyewitness: History through the eyes of those who lived it)
URL: <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/poland.htm>

How do you tell the difference between a primary and a secondary source?

What type of information (facts, artwork, interpretation, social commentary) does each of these sources provide?

Which source do you find most helpful in understanding what actually happened in Poland on September 1, 1939? If you find discrepancies in the three accounts, which source do you think is most accurate? Why?

Which source do you find most interesting? Most dramatic? Most shocking? Most insightful?

If someone only had time to read one of these sources, which would you recommend?