1.2 Sources, method and analysis

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS source • reliability • method • analysis • primary source • secondary source • peer review

Objective

Gather and use evidence well: find good **sources**, judge their **reliability**, choose a suitable **method** (library research, experiment, survey, text analysis), and **analyse** rather than describe.

You must be able to:

- find academic and primary sources
- evaluate a source's reliability and relevance
- choose a method that fits the subject and question
- analyse data and texts, not just report them
- record notes and sources as you go

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Sources

type	examples	value
primary	original data, documents, interviews, your own experiment	direct evidence
secondary	scholarly books and journal articles	expert analysis
tertiary	encyclopedias, textbooks	background only

Judging a source

Who wrote it, and what expertise do they have? When? Was it peer-reviewed? What is its purpose? Does it give evidence and references? Is it relevant to *your* question?

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Methods by subject

Sciences: controlled experiments or databases (with variables and repeats). Economics: data and theory applied to a real market. History: documents evaluated for origin and purpose. Literature: close reading with critical views. Your method must fit the **subject guidance**.

Analysis, not description

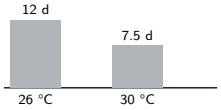
Description: "The data show prices rose." **Analysis**: "Prices rose by 18 % after the tax, more than the 10 % tax itself, which suggests that…". Analysis explains **why**, compares, weighs and links to the question.

Worked example. In a biology experiment, mean bleaching time fell from 12.0 days at 26 °C to 7.5 days at 30 °C. Change $= (7.5 - 12.0)/12.0 \times 100 = -37.5\,\%$. Analysis then asks whether the difference is larger than the variation between repeats.

2 Practice

2.1 Distinguish **primary** from **secondary** sources, with an example of each for a history EE. [2]

2.2 In an experiment, mean time fell from 12.0 to 7.5 days. Calculate the percentage change, and explain **one** further step needed before concluding that temperature caused the change. [3]



2.3 Explain **four** questions a student should ask to judge whether a website source is reliable. [4]

2.4 Rewrite this descriptive sentence as **analysis**: "In the novel, it rains a lot." Then explain what makes your version analytical. [6]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(EE planning.)* For your proposed research question, explain your **method** and **sources**, and evaluate **two** limitations of the method. [10]



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3.2 Explain why the EE should mostly use **secondary** and **primary** sources rather than **tertiary** ones. [5]

Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

primary: from the time or the original evidence, e.g. a 1948 government document or newspaper; secondary: later analysis by scholars, e.g. a historian's book on the airlift

2.2

$(7.5 - 12.0)/12.0 \times 100 = \mathbf{-37.5}\,\%$; compare the difference with the spread between repeats, e.g. standard deviation or a statistical test; check that other variables, e.g. light and water quality, were controlled

2.3

who wrote it, and with what expertise?; when was it published or updated?; what is its purpose, e.g. to inform or to sell?; does it give evidence and references, and is it checked by others?

2.4

an analytical sentence that links the detail to meaning, e.g. "Rain falls at each of the narrator's losses, so the weather mirrors her grief and prepares the reader for the ending."; explanation: it explains why the detail matters; links to a theme or the research question; could be supported with quotations

3.1

Mark holistically against the EE expectations: [top] focused, well-supported argument, sources and method evaluated, clear structure and precise citation; [middle] mostly focused, some evaluation; [bottom] descriptive, little analysis. Points that may be included: method stated and fits the subject; main sources named and evaluated; how the method will answer the question; limitation 1 explained; limitation 2 explained; how the limitations will be reduced or discussed

3.2

tertiary sources summarize others' work; they lack detail and references for deep analysis; primary sources give direct evidence; secondary sources give expert interpretation to evaluate; examiners reward critical use of strong sources

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