Primary versus Secondary Sources

**Primary sources**provide **first-hand** information to answer your research question. The following examples compare how primary sources might be used to answer a number of different types of research questions.

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| **Research Question** | **How one might use primary sources to answer the question** |
| How do followers of the keto diet feel about others who don't follow keto? | Interview followers of the keto diet  Survey followers of the keto diet  Observe social media posts in keto diet groups and/or posts by keto followers |
| How accurately is forensic science portrayed in the TV show *Blue Bloods*? | Watch *Blue Bloods*and collect examples of how forensic science is shown or talked about |
| How has Covid-19 affected the experience of nurses? | Interview nurses  Survey nurses |
| How does taking meditation breaks at work affect employees' productivity? | Set up an experiment where a random group of employees gets a meditation break, another group gets a break to do  whatever they want, and the final group doesn't get a break. Figure out a way to measure the productivity of each  employee or group, and then compare them. |
| Does the amount of time someone stays focused on a task affect memory? | Set up an experiment where people look at a random selection of cards for different amounts of time.  Compare how well they remember the cards. |
| How are today's depictions of female beauty different from 20 years ago? | Compare images of the most highly-paid models from today versus from 20 years ago. |
| How does the distance of a person's car from the nearest shopping cart return  relate to the likelihood of a person returning their cart? | Observe a parking lot as often and for as long as possible, tracking who returns carts and how far their car was from  the shopping cart return. |
| How does the music playing during a scene influence people's interpretations? | Have different groups of people watch the same scene set to different music, and interview them about what they  perceive to be happening in the scene. |