Information Types & Characteristics

Factual vs. Analytical

**Factual Information**

"Just the facts"

Objective

Real

"Something that actually exists; reality; truth," *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*

**Examples of factual questions:**

- "What is the temperature in Denver?"
- "Who won the Academy Award for best actor in 1993?"
- "What is the distance in miles between Cleveland and Chicago?"
- "How many cups are in a gallon?"

**Examples of sources that contain factual information:**

- Dictionaries
- Atlases
- Handbooks
- Directories

**Analytical Information**

Interpretations

Analysis

Criticism

analyze- "to examine critically, so as to bring out the essential elements or give the essence of." *Random House Dictionary of the English Language.*

**Examples of questions requiring analytical information:**

- "What are the themes in Herman Melville's novel Moby Dick?"
- "What were the contributing factors to the increase of drug use in the 1960's?"
- What are the related effects for two-career marriages and the traditional family structure?"

**Examples of sources that contain analytical information:**

- Books
- Articles in journals
- Subject Encyclopedias
## Objective vs. Subjective

### Objective Information
- Without Bias
- Non-judgmental

"not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudices; based on facts," *Random House Dictionary of the English Language.*

#### Examples of objective information needs:
- Chronology of the Feminist movement
- The eight stages of development according to Erik Erikson
- A list of OSHA guidelines for restaurant employees

#### Examples of sources that contain objective information:
- Encyclopedias
- Subject Dictionaries

### Subjective Information
- Opinions
- Personal viewpoints
- Evaluations
- Existing in the mind

#### Examples of subjective information needs:
- Criticism of Eugene O’Neill’s play "A Moon for the Misbegotten."
- Evaluation of a course based on class comments.
- Book review or movie reviews.

#### Examples of sources that may contain subjective information:
- Books
- Periodicals
- Classmates, Instructors, Friends, etc.
- Media
- Internet

## Primary vs. Secondary

### Primary Information
- Information in its original form
- Not translated by anyone else
- Has not been published elsewhere

#### Examples of primary information needs:
- Explanation or instructions from an employer or teacher
- An eyewitness account of a house fire
- A research article on the discovery of a new virus
- Georgia O’Keefe’s interpretation of a flower

#### Examples of primary information sources:
- Research journals
- Firsthand accounts; Newspapers or television
- Diaries
- Original artwork

### Secondary Information
- Repackaged
- Examination, restatement or interpretation of primary information
- Tools that lead to primary sources

#### Examples of secondary information needs:
- Notes borrowed from a classmate for a missed class
- An explanation of “The Diary of Anne Frank"
- A bibliography on the letters of Ernest Hemingway
- An account of the journey of Lewis and Clark

#### Examples of secondary information sources:
- Bibliography
- Documentary
- Review Articles

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[http://www.tri-c.edu/library/docs/Inforchar.htm](http://www.tri-c.edu/library/docs/Inforchar.htm)