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1999 Volume VII: Electronics in the 20th Century: Nature, Technology, People, Companies, and the  
Marketplace

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## **From Dusty to Digital: Using Primary Sources in the Information Age ? Researching Titanic**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.07.01  
by Gail G. Hall

This unit, "From Dusty to Digital: Using Primary Sources in the Information Age ? Researching Titanic", will introduce students to primary sources: what they are, why they are important, how to identify them, how to access them, and how to evaluate them. It is important for students to work with primary sources so that they can understand history as an interpretive science rather than as a body of facts. Students need to "examine the historical record for themselves; to consult documents, journals, diaries, artifacts, historic sites, and other evidence from the past, and to do so imaginatively ? taking into account the historical context in which these records were created and comparing the multiple points of view of those on the scene at the time" (National History Standards). Through online catalogs and web sites such as the Library of Congress's "American Memory", digitization has made identifying and accessing such materials much easier. The context for this unit is the sinking of Titanic in April 1912 and the role of wireless telegraphy. However, the lessons in this unit have been designed so that they can be adapted to any rich historical content.

(Recommended for History, Social Studies, and Library Media, grades 9-12.)

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