



Using the information you gather on the web site, answer the following questions about the unit.

1. The letters used as sources in this unit are both business letters. Why might a business letter be a good source for your research?

Business letters can tell us about a person's work and also about the customers they may have served. Business letters also can give us some information about the costs of products made or services performed by the company.

What problems might arise when using a business letter as a source?

Business letters don't usually tell us anything about the personal life of the recipient or the sender. Also, more research would need to be done to see if agreements made or questions asked in the letter were ever completed or answered.

How might you use a business letter differently than you might use a personal letter?

You may use a business letter to document a transaction (sale of property, inheritance, legal action) or gain information about the type of business done by the person. It might also help in a study of that particular industry or other industries in the area at that time. A personal letter could tell you about the person's family, their daily life, or how they spent their free time. It can also give you some clues about people who were important in the person's life.

2. Newspapers often publish anniversary editions or commemorative editions of their papers to celebrate or mark a special event. In this case, the Hibbing newspaper published an issue celebrating the town's first 10 years. How might an anniversary edition be a good source for a historian to use?

An anniversary edition can be a good summary piece for your research. It can introduce you to major events that happened in the area during that time period and lead you to names, events, or other information that might better guide your research. The information published in an anniversary edition can also give you some indication of what events the town thought were most important during that period.

What might be important cautions to consider when using an anniversary edition as a source?

When using an anniversary edition, you will need to remember that many of the articles are often written much later, and therefore will be less likely to fit a "strict definition" of a primary source. Also, many newspapers will edit these editions to coincide with their own opinions about what events were important to the town, so not all events of the time period will be included. Other citizens may agree or disagree with the importance of some of the events listed.

Beyond the Sources • Edmund J. Longyear

3. Longyear kept a notebook of his work drilling for iron. What kinds of things can we learn from notebooks like this kept by scientists?

Scientific data about the working conditions at the time and the equipment used can tell us much about the time period and what those jobs required.

Why might it be important for future scientists to see these notebooks?

Sometimes this data could contain important observations about an event or a natural phenomenon that could be used by scientists today.

Why might research done years or even hundreds of years in the past still be helpful?

Some information gathered by scientists from long ago can tell us about their life and work, which might serve as a good “starting point” for scientists of today. Also, research that may have been dangerous to do may not have to be repeated if the information has already been gathered and can be used again.

4. The advertisement in this section is encouraging people to buy land in a developing town on the range. What might we do if we wanted to find out if this town survived over time?

The first thing to do would be to look at a map of Minnesota to see if the town is listed. We might also check state records, newspapers, or travel advertisements to determine if a town survived until today.

What sources might help us learn more about its early years?

City and historical society records from the community and state records of the town’s development could help us find out about its beginnings. Newspaper articles about events or plans for the town would also give us some good information. It might be possible to interview someone who has lived in the town for a very long time for information about the town’s development.

What sources might help us find out more about the town today?

A visit or phone call to the local chamber of commerce would provide us with some basic tourist information, while a visit to its local historical society would tell us more about the town’s history.