

Key Concepts:

This learning tool lends itself to learning two foundational social studies concepts:

- the concept of **primary and secondary sources**;
- and the concept of **migration**.

1. Key Concept: Primary and Secondary Sources

Historians learn about the past by doing research. Their sources are identified as either “primary” or “secondary.” Primary sources are those that were created during the time being studied. Historians gather primary sources as evidence of what the past was like. They use these primary sources to write history. That is, they use them to create secondary sources. Secondary sources, like textbooks, were compiled later. They have been written by historians, who used primary sources (and probably other secondary sources) to create the book.

Here is an example of primary and secondary sources: A newspaper article from April 15, 1912, reporting that the Titanic sank is a primary source because it was created at the time the sinking occurred. A 1998 book about the sinking of the Titanic is a secondary source because it was written later. This secondary source likely quotes from and refers to 1912 newspaper articles.

Apply the concept of primary and secondary sources to cumin. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Cumin](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- Which type of source are recipes written in cuneiform on clay tablets? Why?¹
- Which type of source is a 10th-century-CE cookbook? Why?²
- Which type of source is Egyptologist Hilary Wilson’s study on the food of early pharaonic Egypt, *Egyptian Food and Drink*? Why?³
- Which type of source is “Spice Migrations: Cumin”? Why?⁴

2. Key Concept: Migration

Migration refers to movement, of people, of animals or of things. The six articles in this series, Spice Migrations, explore how spices moved, over time, from their places of origin to other parts of the world.

Apply the concept of migration to the history of cumin. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Cumin](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- To study migration, you need to know where the migrating item started. What challenge do historians face while exploring cumin’s origins?⁵
- Where do scholars believe cumin originated?⁶
- What group of traders brought cumin to India?⁷
- What group of traders brought cumin to the Americas?⁸

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1. Primary. They are from the period being studied.
 2. Primary. It is from the period being studied.
 3. Secondary. It is a scholarly work that draws on primary sources and the works of other scholars.
 4. Secondary. It reports about the past, using primary sources as evidence.
 5. Cumin is so abundant that it’s difficult to pin down where it originated.
 6. The lands around Eastern Mediterranean and the Nile Valley.
 7. Arab traders.
 8. Spanish traders.