Using Primary Sources to Improve Your Dissertation

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What we’ll discuss…

1. Introduction
   ▪ Who is Adam Matthew? What do we do?

2. Primary Sources
   ▪ Why use primary sources
   ▪ How to use primary sources
     ▪ Example 1. Mass Observation Online
     ▪ Example 2. Foreign Office Files for China, 1919-1980
     ▪ Example 3. Shakespeare’s Globe Archive
Who is Adam Matthew?
Collection Themes

Area Studies
Cultural Studies
Empire and Globalism
Ethnic Studies
Gender and Sexuality
History
Literature
Politics
Theatre
War and Conflict
Collections at Edinburgh
Why Primary Sources?
Edinburgh Grade Descriptors

- **A2 Excellent (80-89%)** An authoritative answer that provides a fully effective response to the question. It should show a command of the literature and an ability to integrate that literature and go beyond it. The analysis should achieve a high level of quality early on and sustain it through to the conclusion. Sources should be used accurately and concisely to inform the answer but not dominate it. There should be a sense of a critical and committed argument, mindful of other interpretations but not afraid to question them.

- **A1 Excellent (90-100%)** An answer that fulfils all of the criteria for A2 and in addition shows an exceptional degree of insight and independent thought, together with flair in tackling issues. Work displaying the highest level of scholarship and originality attainable within any given course/year of study.
The difference to your dissertation

- Access to primary sources empowers original research
- Original research facilitates critical thinking and going beyond the arguments encountered in secondary literature
- Can transform a student dissertation into an original piece of research
Welcome to Mass Observation Online

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Mass Observation Online

www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk
Foreign Office Files for China, 1919-1980

www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/FO_China
Thank you!

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