## **PET - QUALITATIVE SECONDARY DOCUMENTS**

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| **Define the** **method** | **Information that has been collected, created by someone else for their own purposes but which a sociologist can then use.** |
| **Example(s)** | * **Letters, diaries, newspaper articles etc.**
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| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** | * Quick and cheap because someone else has already produced the information.
* Usually easy to access.
 | * The data may not provide information that is specific to the sociologists needs.
* Many documents will be old and damages meaning that they could be difficult to interpret and they may be missing information (e.g. missing pages.)
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| **Ethical** | * You don’t need consent as information is already existing.
 | * You may need to have consent in order to gain access to the documents.
* There may be no consent from the person who originally produced the source.
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| **Theoretical** | * Interactionists like it because they allow the study of personal experiences to take place. (William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki- “The Polish peasant in Europe and America” use personal documents to reveal the meanings)
 | * May lack validity as many personal documents are from a first person account, thus information may be person specific- may lack representativeness.
* Authenticity must be questioned (Hitler diaries were fake.)
* Documents may not be credible (Stewart Stein notes that documents on the internet are often not checked for accuracy before publication.)
* Lacks reliability- can’t repeat how they were collected
* Positivists see it as a lacking of objective, quantitative, scientific data.
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