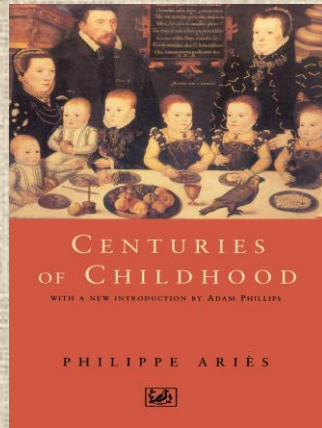
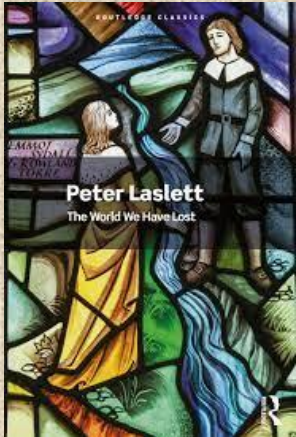


Historical Documents

Historical documents are a secondary source that can be either **quantitative** or **qualitative** in nature. This includes parish records, birth and death registries, sources of media and many personal and public documents from the past

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Strengths

Give a valuable insight into the past that is unobtainable from other research methods

Can provide **qualitative data** that shows the meanings and motivations people had in their social behaviours

Documents such as parish records and birth, marriage and death registries **pre-date many records of official statistics.**

May be difficult to access if they are part of private collections or need translation from older languages

Limitations

While historical public documents may be more reliable, historical personal documents may require authentication or may present an unrepresentative view of society.

Using parish records, Peter Laslett found that the nuclear family existed long before industrialisation and was more common than other sociologists had suggested. While Philippe Ariès used portraits to establish the changing nature of childhood from middle ages to 1970s

Sociological Research Methods