

FINDING BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Step 1 - How Much Information Do You Need?

Sources vary from brief factual information all the way up to full-length books with in-depth analysis.

Full-length Biographies - Read the section in the box to the right.

Brief Biographies - The sources listed below have briefer information, anywhere from a paragraph to several pages. If the source has "REF" in the call number, it is a print source in the Reference section of the library. It has to be used there or photo-copied. Online resources give access instructions.

Step 2 - Focus Your Search

Many biography sources specialize in their coverage.

- Why Is the Person Famous?
- When Did the Person Live?
- Where Did the Person Live?

For Contemporary Figures

Biography in Context

is available in libraries and off-campus with an ACCeID. Go to library.austincc.edu/eresources/findarticles.php and click "**A-Z List of Resources**" to select an index by title or subject. Biographical information on people throughout history, around the world, and across all disciplines.

Biography.com

is available on the web to everyone at (www.biography.com.) This web site provides very short entries on over 20,000 people. The emphasis is on current newsmakers, but some historical figures are included.

Pop Culture Universe

is available in libraries and off-campus with an ACCeID. Multiple sources on American and world popular culture and politics, past and present

Periodical Articles

ACC students can get to web indexes that will have the full-text of articles from thousands of magazines, journals, and newspapers. and click "**A-Z List of Resources**" to select an index by title or subject. If your person has not been famous for long or is only famous in a very specific field, articles in periodicals are often the only sources of information.

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Library Services

Book-Length Biographies

If you want an entire book about a person, you need to use the library's online catalog. Public libraries usually have separate sections for biographies, but college libraries mix them in with the other books on a topic. For example, biographies of musicians will be in the music section.

- If you already know the title of a specific biography, use the *Title* section of the library catalog.
- If you are looking for a biography of a specific person, use the *General Subjects* section and type in the person's last name and then first name.
- If you want biographies of people in a specific discipline, use the *Keywords* section and type in the discipline and the word "biography," for example: mathematicians and biography.

When you find a book listed in the catalog that looks good, write down the call number. Be sure to see if the book is available and if it's at your library. Books that are checked out can be reserved for you when they're returned. Books at other campuses can be sent to you. Ask the staff about this process. Books about a person are usually shelved together, so when you look for the call number for a book, look at the other titles nearby.

For Authors

Contemporary Authors

Dictionary of Literary Biography

Literature Resource Center

(Available in libraries and off-campus with an ACCeID.) Go to library.austincc.edu/eresources/findarticles.php and click "**A-Z List of Resources**" to select an index by title or subject. For information about writers of nonfiction, *Contemporary Authors* is the most useful.

All of them are good for fiction writers. *Dictionary of Literary Biography* has the most in-depth information.

Literature Resource Center is a source to biographies of authors and literary works

For Historical Figures

Biography in Context

Dictionary of Literary Biography Online

Gale Virtual Reference Library Online

For biographical information on people throughout history, around the world, and across all disciplines use

Biography in Context,

Dictionary of Literary Biography Online, and

Gale Virtual Reference Library Online collection.

All resources are available

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and click "**A-Z List of Resources**" to select an index by title or subject.