

## Biography Resource Guide

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[Periodical Indexes and Full-text Databases](#)

[Selected Internet Sources](#)

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In addition to the sources below, users should check the [Online Catalog](#) for biographies and autobiographies on specific individuals. See also the "Biographical Sources" sections in the **African American Studies** and **Women's Studies Resource Guides**.

### Periodical Indexes and Full-text Databases

#### [Biography Resource Center](#)

The Biography Resource Center, now part of Gale Cengage, contains over 440,000 biographies for more than 340,000 individuals from such sources as *Contemporary Authors*, *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, *Newsmakers* (also in Sawyer: REF CT120.C66 1988-2005), *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (8th ed. in Sawyer: REF ML105 .B16 1992), *Contemporary Theatre, Film, and Television*, *Notable Twentieth-Century Scientists*, *Contemporary Black Biography*, *Writers Directory*, and *Marquis Who's Who*. It also includes the full-text of biographical articles from over 325 magazines and newspapers. Entries can be searched by several fields including name, gender, occupation, ethnicity, and birth/death dates. Articles include links to websites with information on the subjects.

#### [The New York Times 1851+](#)

This full-text database of *The New York Times* consists of scanned images of the actual paper. Note that there is a 3 year time lag for more current issues which can be found online in LexisNexis Academic or in print or on microfilm in the Library. In addition to searches for articles, users can also search for obituaries, a good source of biographical information.

## [LexisNexis Academic](#)

LexisNexis Academic contains the full-text of recent and back issues for hundreds of domestic and international newspapers, including *The New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and *The Washington Post*. You can search for full-text articles, including obituaries, or select "Document Type"- "Obituary." You can also select the "People" tab to search in such sources as "Biographies Plus News." For major newspapers in Massachusetts check the [Massachusetts Newsstand](#) which covers the *Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, *Patriot Ledger* (Quincy), *Telegram & Gazette* (Worcester), and other papers.

## [Primary Sources in U.S. History](#)

Primary Sources in U.S. History in LexisNexis Academic contains two sections: Primary Sources in African American History and Primary Sources in American Women's History. Each contains primary and secondary source material from colonial times to the present. The database includes the full-text of primary sources (autobiographies, manuscripts, government and legal documents) as well as scholarly secondary articles.

## [Oxford African American Studies Center](#)

The Oxford African American Studies Center is a major database for all types of primary and secondary biographical resources in this field, including the *African American National Biography*, *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, and the *Encyclopedia of African American History*.

## [Oxford Art Online](#)

Oxford Art Online includes Grove Art Online (the electronic version of *The Dictionary of Art*), the *Oxford Companion to Western Art*, and other art reference titles. Check the "Biographies" section for information on over 21,000 artists. Sawyer has the 34 volume print edition of the *Dictionary of Art*: REF N31 .D5 1996.

## [Academic Search Complete](#)

### [Academic OneFile](#)

Although not specifically geared towards biographical sources, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO) and Academic OneFile (Thomson Gale, formerly Infotrac)) are both good starting points for finding articles on well known personalities in all fields.

## **Selected Internet Sources**

### [The Internet Public Library: POTUS, Presidents of the United States](#)

<http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/>

The Internet Public Library, "founded at the University of Michigan School of Information and hosted by Drexel University's College of Information Science & Technology" is a web site that includes many ready reference links. Fact sheets on each of the presidents include presidential election results, cabinet members, links to internet biographies and historical documents, and

portraits or photographs of the presidents. For biographical information on presidential wives, take a look at the White House website [The White House: First Ladies Gallery](#).

### [Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774 - Present](#)

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>

A search screen enables you to find the names of congressional members who match criteria such as position, state, party and year or congress. A brief biography and terms of office are available for each member the search retrieves. The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) maintains a website, [America's Founding Fathers](#), part of the "Charters of Freedom" site, that includes brief biographies of the delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

### [BiologyBrowser: Biographies of Biologists](#)

<http://www.biologybrowser.org/bb/Subject/History/Biography/index.shtml/>

This resource page in the BiologyBrowser (BIOSIS) website contains links to biographies about prominent biologists. The links are arranged alphabetically by surname but the list of biologists is not long and can be easily browsed. More biographies of scientists can be found at [The MacTutor History of Mathematics Archive: Biographies Index](#), hosted by the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. This site includes an extensive, searchable (by name, date, and keyword) collection of links to biographies about mathematicians. Also recommended is [The Faces of Science: African Americans in the Sciences](#), developed by Mitchell C. Brown, a librarian at Princeton University, who has created a compilation of links organized by scientific discipline as well as by name.

### [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

This free, online encyclopedia hosted by the Metaphysics Research Lab of Stanford University has hundreds of refereed entries, including biographical information on philosophers, that are "maintained and kept up to date by an expert or group of experts in the field." Search for philosophers by name or browse topics arranged in alphabetical order.

### [Poets.org](#)

<http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/58>

This well-designed and easily navigable website from the Academy of American Poets hosts concise biographies of more than 500 poets, mainly American but also from other countries. Each entry includes a selection of the writer's poems, a bibliography, and related links on the web.

### [Voices from the Gaps](#)

<http://voices.cla.umn.edu/newsite/index.htm>

The University of Minnesota Department of English has created this website about "women artists and writers of color." Each writer is represented by a page that includes brief biocritical information (sometimes with a photograph of the writer), a bibliography of the writer's works, and links to additional web resources. You can search for writers in a variety of ways, e.g., by ethnic/racial background and place of birth. [A Celebration of Women Writers: Authors and](#)

[Books](#), another good starting point to find information about women writers, is a large, browsable directory of links organized by name, date, ethnicity, country information.

### [National Gallery of Art \(NGA\): Search the Collection](#)

<http://www.nga.gov/search/index.shtm>

The NGA website has made accessible a database of the works in its collection in Washington, D. C. The collection is searchable by artist, title, subject, provenance, school, etc. Many of the entries include brief biographies and images of artwork. More biographies of European artists who created paintings and sculptures between the years 1150 and 1800 may be found at the [Web Gallery of Art: Artist Index](#), a website created by two art enthusiasts. Brief biographical information, a discussion of the artist's work, and digital reproductions of the artwork are included for each artist.

### [PBS Jazz: Biographies](#)

<http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/>

The website for Ken Burns' film *Jazz* contains brief biographies of nearly 100 jazz musicians. The biographical information is drawn from *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, in Sawyer: REF ML102.J3 N48 1988, audio features are excerpted from NPRjazz.org, and audio samples of the music come from various record companies. Another worthwhile site for musicians' biographies is [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: Inductees](#) where you will find biographical information about performers, including musical groups, sidemen, and non-performers, e.g., recording industry executives, who have been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame since 1986.

### [Biography Resources: Finding Information on the Famous, Infamous, and Obscure](#)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crlnews/backissues2002/january/biographyresources.htm>

*College & Research Library News*, a publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries (American Library Association), published this annotated list of internet resources for biographical information.

### [Biography.com](#)

<http://biography.com/>

The A&E (Arts & Entertainment) Television Networks' website for the Biography Channel gives you free access to 25,000 brief biographies of past and present notable persons (along with some pop-up advertisements). Entries include several paragraphs of biographical information, a photograph or portrait, and links to related information on the web.

## **Selected Print and Electronic Reference Sources**

### [Gale Virtual Reference Library \(GVRL\)](#)

"Gale Virtual Reference Library is a database of encyclopedias and specialized reference sources for multidisciplinary research." GVRL contains many biographical sources both in the "Biography" section and in other sections, e.g., "Multicultural Studies." These include:

- Encyclopedia of World Biography. 2nd ed., 1998-2006
- Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Popular Musicians Since 1990. 2 vols., 2004
- Business Leader Profiles for Students. 2 vols., 2002 (Sawyer: REF HC102.5 A2 B79 1999)
- Cambridge Dictionary of Scientists. 2nd ed., 2002
- Notable Sports Figures. 4 vols., 2004
- Scribner Encyclopedia of American Lives. The 1960s. 2 vols., 2003
- Who's Who Among African Americans. 19th ed., 2006
- International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 9 vols., 2nd ed., 2008  
The Biographical Supplement to the 1st edition is available in Sawyer: REF H40.A2 I5 1979.

### [Oxford Reference Online](#)

This source includes biographies in various subject categories, e.g., in History: *Who's Who in the Twentieth Century*, *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*; in Art & Architecture: *The Oxford Dictionary of American Art and Artists*.

### [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

Always a good source of background information, the online version of the complete *Encyclopedia Britannica* includes brief essays on important figures, both past and present.

### [Credo Reference](#)

Credo Reference (formerly Xreferplus) is an "online reference library" of over 300 titles, including *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, *Marquis Who Was Who in America*, *Marquis Who's Who in America*, *Marquis Who's Who in the World*, and *Notable American Women* (2004), the latest in a series covering the years from 1607 through the 20th century; Sawyer has this and earlier volumes: REF CT3260 .N57/N5725/N573.

### [Current Biography Yearbook](#)

REF CT100 .C8 1940+

This title from H.W.Wilson is an annual cumulation updated by monthly issues.

### [Dictionary of American Biography](#)

REF E176 .D56

The first 22 volumes, including supplements 1 and 2, of this work from the American Council of Learned Societies, now published by Gale Cengage, cover biographies through 1940. Sawyer has additional supplements and indexes through #8 (1970): REF E176. D563.

### [Dictionary of Scientific Biography](#) 18 vols.

REF Q141 .D5 1970-1980

Published by Gale Cengage for the American Council of Learned Societies.

[Dictionary of Scientists](#) 1999

Available online in NetLibrary and Oxford Reference Online.

[Contemporary Authors](#)

REF PN451 .E8 1962-2003 v.1-205

[Contemporary Authors. New Revision Series](#)

REF PN451 .E8 NRS 1981-2003 v.1-113

These multi-volume series provide biographical and bibliographical sketches for modern authors from around the world. Recent volumes of both series, from 2003 on, can be found online in the [Gale Virtual Reference Library](#) Literature section. Use Gale's [Literary Index](#) to easily identify the series and volumes that cover a particular author or a particular work.

[Dictionary of Literary Biography](#)

These volumes cover both British and American authors. Each volume deals with a specific genre, time-period, or group. Sample volumes include [American Short-Story Writers Since World War II](#): REF PS374. S5 A3963/64/65/66 1993- , [Modern British dramatists, 1900-1945](#): REF PR623 .M63 1982, and [Asian American Writers](#): REF PS153 .A84 A28 2005.

[Women in World History](#) 17 vols.

REF HQ1115. W6 1999-2001

[Hispanic Writers](#) 2nd ed.

REF PQ7081.3 .H58 1999

Contains a "selection of sketches from Contemporary Authors" and "original" entries for 20th century Hispanic authors.

[Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists](#)

REF HM478 .B583 2000

[Key Contemporary Social Theorists](#)

REF HM478 .K473 2003

[New Grove Dictionary of Music And Musicians](#) 20 vols.

REF ML100 .N48 1980

[Heads of States and Governments](#)

REF D412 .L46 1994

"A worldwide encyclopedia of over 2,300 leaders, 1945 through 1992."

[Hutchinson Encyclopedia of Modern Political Biography](#)

February 2005

[The American Presidents](#)

REF E176.1 .A6566 2000

[Who Was Who in America](#) 10 vols.

REF E176 .W64 1993

Covers period from 1607 to 1993. Later editions available online in Biography Resource Center and Credo Reference.

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