When you consider a huge number of notable people of the past and the present, you will have a better idea of the enormity of the problem of finding biographical information on them. The library has a great variety of biographical sources. The ones you may have to consult will be determined by the type of information needed and by the following characteristics of your subject:

- Nationality
- Time period in which the individual lived
- Profession
- Fame (very famous or known only in a particular field of activity)

If you know absolutely nothing about the person you are researching, use one of the sources listed in Section I to identify the person by nationality, time, period, and profession. Then go to the sources listed in Sections II and III. If you need only brief information, one of the sources listed in Section II may be adequate. However, for more complete information, use one or more of the sources listed in Section III.

I. FOR IDENTIFICATION

920.02 B57

This alphabetical index of persons both living and deceased is international in scope and covers every field of endeavor. Entries after each name are to reference works in which a biography of the individual appears.

Indexes Biography Index. 1946 to date.

Lists periodical articles and books on people in all fields, both living and dead. Identifies each person by date, occupation and nationality if not American.


Biography Reference Bank contains biographical information on approximately half a million people, from antiquity to the present, along with thousands of images. It contains the full text of the articles from more than 100 volumes of biographical reference books published by H. W. Wilson, including all the articles from all volumes of Current Biography, the World Author Series, Nobel Prize Winners, World Artists, World Film Directors, American Reformers, and numerous biographical books on musicians and composers throughout history. In addition to the full text biographies, Biography Reference Bank contains millions of magazine citations (many of which contain full-text).
from all of the Wilson Indexing Databases, including all citations from Biography Index Database after 1984. The biographies are searchable by name, profession, title, place of origin, gender, race/ethnicity, titles of works, date of birth, date of death, keyword, and presence of images.

Ref.  
C47  
Useful for locating brief information about individuals of all periods and places.

Ref.  
Encyclopedias (check index volume first)  
031  
Some are more useful than others for biographies, e.g. Encyclopedia Americana is particularly strong in American biographies.

II. FOR BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The following sources give abbreviated information covering date and place of birth, marital status and number of children, current address, current position, positions held in the past, membership in societies, and selected publications.

Living Persons (or those who have been prominent during the 20th century)

Ref.  
In8  
Provides brief data on prominent persons throughout the world. Especially valuable as a source of data on persons from small countries who are seldom cited in other sources.

Ref.  
Who's Who. 1991 to date.  
W62  
Supplies brief data on prominent living British citizens as well as some of other nationalities.

Ref.  
W62  
Gives brief data on prominent living Americans.

Deceased Persons

Ref.  
Who Was Who. 1897 to date.  
W62w  
Brief data on British citizens who are no longer living.
Ref. *Who Was Who in America.* 1607 to date.
920.073 W62w
Brief data on Americans who are no longer living.

### III. FOR LONGER NARRATIVE OR DISCUSSION

#### Living Persons

Indexes *New York Times Index.*

Indexes important data on persons living during the period covered. Gives date of death under the heading "Deaths".

Ref. *Current Biography.* 1940 to date.
920.02 C93
Includes an average of 300-350 biographies annually of persons of various nationalities, professions, and occupations, who are currently prominent in their particular fields. Also included are obituaries at the time of death for those included previously. Be sure to use the index at the back of the most recent volume. Library does not have complete set.

Ref. *Contemporary Authors.* 1962 to date.
928.1 C767c
Provides an up-to-date source of biographical information on current authors in many fields - humanities, social sciences, and sciences and from many countries. Sketches give personal facts (including names of parents, children, etc.), career, writings, work in progress, sidelights, and occasional biographical sources.

#### Deceased Persons

920.073 D56
Includes more than 13,600 biographies of Americans no longer living who have made a significant contribution to American life. Has supplements and an index.

920.042 D56
Contains articles by specialists, and excellent bibliography. Gives detailed biographies of important inhabitants of the British Isles and its colonies whose deaths preceded publication date of DNB. Important names are treated at great length, minor names more briefly. All articles are generally reliable and scholarly.
OTHER SOURCES

There are many other biographical sources in the Reference Collection. Feel free to browse the Dewey Decimal section starting at 920. Many of the other sources not mentioned here are organized by profession, such as *Who’s Who in American Politics* or *Contemporary Novelists*.

ONLINE CATALOG

The online catalog is the place to look to see if the library has a book about a person. Use the Subject search and type in the person's last name first.

If the sources listed above do not fill your need, please consult a Reference Librarian.