**Definition of Biography**

A biography is the non-[fiction](https://literarydevices.net/fiction/), written history or account of a person’s life. Biographies are intended to give an objective portrayal of a person, written in the third person. Biographers collect information from the [subject](https://literarydevices.net/subject/) (if he/she is available), acquaintances of the subject, or in researching other sources such as reference material, experts, records, diaries, interviews, etc. Most biographers intend to present the life [story](https://literarydevices.net/story/) of a person and establish the [context](https://literarydevices.net/context/) of their story for the reader, whether in terms of history and/or the present day. In turn, the reader can be reasonably assured that the information presented about the biographical subject is as true and authentic as possible.

Biographies can be written about a person at any time, no matter if they are living or dead. However, there are limitations to biography as a literary device. Even if the subject is involved in the biographical process, the biographer is restricted in terms of access to the subject’s thoughts or feelings.

Biographical works typically include details of significant events that shape the life of the subject as well as information about their childhood, education, career, and relationships. Occasionally, a biography is made into another form of art such as a film or dramatic production. The musical production of “Hamilton” is an excellent example of a biographical work that has been turned into one of the most popular musical productions in Broadway history.

Most people assume that the subject of a biography must be a person who is [famous](https://literarydevices.net/famous/) in some way. However, that’s not always the case. In general, biographical subjects tend to be interesting people who have pioneered something in their field of expertise or done something extraordinary for humanity. In addition, biographical subjects can be people who have experienced something unusual or heartbreaking, committed terrible acts, or who are especially gifted and/or talented.

As a literary device, biography is important because it allows readers to learn about someone’s story and history. This can be enlightening, inspiring, and meaningful in creating connections. Here are some common examples of biographical subjects:

* political leaders
* artists
* musicians
* entrepreneurs
* actors
* writers
* historical figures
* serial killers
* notorious people
* scientists
* inventors
* poets
* political activists
* athletes
* adventurers/explorers
* religious leaders
* [Heroes](https://literarydevices.net/hero/)
* military leaders
* cultural figures
* spies