



# Research a Person

## Before You Start ...

Here are a few questions to think about as you begin your research:

- When did they live? What was it like to be alive then?
- What was their education or training like?
- How did their family shape their later years?
- Who were they involved with — professionally and personally — and did that influence them?
- How has their life or work changed the world? Did they influence someone else?

## Research Tips

**Get the big picture first!** Choose a general resource (like an encyclopedia) that will give you a short biography of your person. Then move on to in-depth resources with more details. If you start with a detailed resource first, you'll get overwhelmed with too many facts and it will be harder to sift out the most important information.

## Resources

### Print

- [Biography Today](#) (in-depth) – Current politicians and celebrities; mostly American.
- [Current Biography](#) (in-depth) – Important people from the 20th century; international.
- [Encyclopedia of World Biography](#) (in-depth) – Important people; international.
- Individual and collective biographies (in-depth) – Search the catalog by subject (Rock, Chris) or keyword (Chris Rock).

### Online Databases

- [World Book Online](#) (general)
- [Biography Resource Center](#) (general and in-depth)
- [Massachusetts Newstand](#) (in-depth articles from the Boston Globe since 1980)

**Important!** You can search these same databases from home by going to the library's research page. Click on the red link for Metrowest Regional Library System and select Online Databases. Enter the barcode number from the back of your public library card and begin searching.

### Internet

Choose a search engine like Google and type your person's name in quotation marks ("Pedro Martinez") so it searches for both names together. Add the word *biography* for more focused information.

Remember to be skeptical about information you find on general web sites; check any facts against more reliable sources like a print encyclopedia, a reference book, or a magazine article.