BACKGROUND: A work about an individual person may be either biographical, critical, or both. Biographical works focus on the personal aspects of the individual’s life, critical works on the individual’s professional, intellectual, or artistic achievements. The provisions in this instruction sheet do not apply to works that are predominantly critical, only to works that are predominantly biographical and in narrative form.

The subdivision –Biography may be used on some collective and individual biographies intended for children and young adults. This instruction sheet contains guidelines for cataloging biographies using CYAC Subject Headings, including the use of the subdivision –Biography.

For instructions on headings for other materials that are sometimes biographical in nature, such as correspondence, diaries, and interviews see C 1480, C 1538, and C 1678.

DEFINITIONS: The following definitions apply for the purposes of this instruction sheet:

Biography (including Autobiography): A narrative work more than 50% of which recounts the personal aspects of the life of one or more individuals. (In the case of historical figures, particularly those from the distant past, where little is known of the personal details of their lives, the limitation of the definition to “personal aspects” does not apply.) Personal aspects include such details as the individual’s early years, education, marriage and other personal relationships, personal habits and personality, family life, travels, personal experiences and tragedies, last years and death, etc. Life means a relatively large portion of the individual’s life, not just a single brief incident.

Collective biography: A biography of two or more individuals.

Individual biography: A biography of one person.

Partial biography: A work that includes some, but less than 50%, biographical material.

I. –Biography. For juvenile materials, the subdivision –Biography is used on both collective and individual biographies. It may be used under headings for ethnic groups (e.g., Chinese Americans–Biography), fields and disciplines in which the heading for the class of persons does not exist and cannot be created (e.g., Aeronautics–Biography), and the heading Women (e.g., Women–Biography).

The subdivision –Biography is not used under headings for class of persons. For guidance, see sec. 2.
2. **General rule.** Assign an appropriate combination of the following types of headings to a biography:

- the name heading(s) for the person(s) [no more than four]
- if appropriate, a “class of persons” heading or a heading for the field or discipline
- if appropriate, an ethnic group heading subdivided by –Biography
- for collective biographies, if appropriate, a geographic heading subdivided by –Biography
- if appropriate, heading(s) to bring out the person’s association with an organization or involvement with a specific event
- topical headings, as appropriate for the work

Each of these headings is discussed specifically in sections 2.a.-2.f., below.

**a. Name heading for the person.** Assign the heading as established in RDA form in the LC Name Authority File (LCNAF). Do not subdivide the name by –Biography. Example:

600 11 $a Keller, Helen, $d 1880-1968.

If the biography focuses on a specific aspect of the person’s life, subdivide the name heading by using the appropriate subdivision from C 1110 (e.g., –Childhood and youth or –Death and burial). Assign this heading as the first heading.

**Literary authors.** For literary authors who write under various names and have more than one name heading, use the heading that serves as the “base heading” for the author, that is, the heading having the complete set of references for the author.

**Official name heading vs. personal name heading.** For individuals who have both an official name heading and a personal name heading, use the personal name heading. For example, use **Carter, Jimmy, 1924-** rather than **United States. President (1977-1981 : Carter).**

**Collective biography.** If the work is about two, three, or four persons, assign the name heading for each. If the work is about more than four persons, omit the name headings.
2. General rule. (Continued)

b. Classes of persons. This heading designates the group of people to which the biographee(s) belongs, as discussed in the work being cataloged (e.g., Musicians, Heads of state, or Football coaches). Do not subdivide class of persons headings geographically. Do not subdivide the heading for class of persons by –Biography.

Exception: –Biography may be used under the heading Women. Example:

600 11 $a Earhart, Amelia, $d 1897-1937.
650 #1 $a Air pilots.
650 #1 $a Women $v Biography.

[not 650 #1 $a Women air pilots.]
[not 650 #1 $a Women air pilots $v Biography.]

The heading Women–Biography may also be used for biographies of adolescent females. Do not use headings such as Teenage girls or Adolescent girls. For collective biographies about both men and women do not add the additional heading Women–Biography.

If a class of persons heading does not exist and cannot be created, add a heading for the person’s field of activity or discipline and subdivide it with –Biography.

Note: The class of persons heading is assigned to individual biographies primarily for the benefit of public and school library users who are seeking biographies of a particular type of person rather than a particular individual. The heading should be selected with that in mind. If the biographee belongs to no discernable class of persons of the type judged likely to be sought by the typical public or school library user, it may be omitted.
2. General rule. (Continued)

**Persons with multifaceted lives or careers.** For a biography that discusses the entire life of a person, select the single heading that best encompasses his/her/their career or lifelong pursuits. In order to achieve consistency, check the online catalog first to determine whether the heading has been used on other biographies of the same person. If a single heading cannot adequately encompass the person’s career or lifelong pursuits, assign more than one heading, provided that the work being cataloged discusses the various aspects of the person’s life designated by the headings assigned. If the work focuses on only one facet, assign only that one heading. For example, if a work discusses Albert Schweitzer’s experiences only as a medical missionary, assign a heading only for that aspect of his career. 

*Example:*

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600 11 $a Robeson, Paul, $d 1898-1976.
650 #1 $a Actors and actresses.
650 #1 $a Singers.
650 #1 $a Political activists.
650 #1 $a African Americans $v Biography.
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**Collective biography with no class of persons.** If a collective biography encompasses a group of people for which a heading representing a class of persons does not exist and cannot be formulated, add the subdivision –Biography under the appropriate topical heading. For example, use Art–Biography for a collective biography of artists, dealers, collectors, museum personnel, etc.

**Standard second headings.** For the following classes of persons, a standard second heading is required.

- **Musicians, Singers, etc.** For biographies of musicians, singers, etc., include an additional heading for the type or genre of music the biographee is most associated with, such as Jazz, Rock music, etc. *Example:*

  ```
  600 11 $a Shakur, Tupac, $d 1971-1996.
  650 #1 $a Musicians.
  650 #1 $a Rap (Music)
  650 #1 $a African Americans $v Biography.
  ```
2. General rule. (Continued)

- **Scientists in specific fields.** For biographies of scientists in specific fields (e.g., Chemistry), include an additional heading for Scientists. Example:

  600 11 $a Mendel, Gregor, $d 1822-1884.
  650 #1 $a Geneticists.
  650 #1 $a Scientists.

- **Track and field athletes.** For biographies of track and field athletes, include an additional heading for Track and field athletes. Example:

  650 #1 $a Runners (Sports).
  650 #1 $a Track and field athletes.

c. **Ethnic groups.** For individual and collective biographies, assign headings for the specific ethnic group of the biographee(s) and subdivide with –Biography. Example:

  600 11 $a Chavez, Cesar, $d 1927-1993.
  650 #1 $a Labor leaders.
  650 #1 $a Mexican Americans $v Biography.
  610 21 $a United Farm Workers.

  [not 650 #1 $a Mexican American labor leaders.]
  [not 650 #1 $a Mexican American labor leaders $v Biography.]

d. **Headings for place.** Assign a geographical heading only on collective biographies and subdivide with –Biography. Example:

  651 #1 $a Italy $v Biography.

e. **Headings for an organization or event.** Assign headings of this type if it is a significant aspect of the work. Do not add –Biography. Example:

  600 11 $a Dunant, Henry, $d 1828-1910.
  650 #1 $a Philanthropists.
  610 21 $a Red Cross and Red Crescent.
  650 #1 $a Solferino, Battle of, Solferino, Italy, 1859.
2. **General rule.** (Continued)

   **f. Topical headings.** Assign headings for other topics discussed in the work, using appropriate subject headings. Do not add –**Biography**.

3. **Special situations.**

   **a. Founders of major religions.** Assign no heading to designate the class of persons.

   **b. Animals and pets.** For an individual biography of an animal or pet, assign the appropriate heading for the individual animal. If the animal has a name that is established as a heading, or if the animal is well known enough for its name to be established, assign it as an additional heading. Assign the owner’s name(s) if appropriate. Do not add –**Biography**.

   **Example:**

   ```
   Title: The true story of Fala
   600 01 $a Fala $c (Dog), $d 1940-1952.
   650 #1 $a Dogs.
   ```

   For collections of true life stories or collective biographies about animals or pets, assign the appropriate heading for the animal. Do not add –**Biography**.

   **Example:**

   ```
   Title: Great canine heroes of all time.
   650 #1 $a Dogs.
   ```

   **c. Spouses of famous people.** For a biographical work about a famous person’s spouse who is or was active in a particular field, assign the heading for the class of persons that designates the spouse’s own field. If the spouse has no special career of his/her/their own, and the work describes personal experiences as the spouse of a more famous person and his/her/their career, assign the heading for the specific category of spouses (e.g., **Presidents’ spouses, Army spouses**, etc.) as the “class of persons” heading. If appropriate, also assign headings for the name of the more famous person and the class of persons to which he/she/they belongs. **Example:**

   ```
   600 11 $a Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, $d 1929-1994.
   650 #1 $a Celebrities.
   650 #1 $a Presidents’ spouses.
   650 #1 $a Women $v Biography
   ```
3. Special situations. (Continued)

d. Children of famous people. For a biographical work about a famous person’s child who is or was active in a particular field, assign the heading for the class of persons that designates the child’s own field. If the child has no special career of his/her/their own, and the work describes the personal experiences of the child of a more famous person and his/her/their career, assign the heading for the specific category of children (e.g., *Children of celebrities, Children of presidents*, etc.) as the “class of persons” heading.

If appropriate, also assign headings for the name of the more famous parent and the class of persons to which he/she/they belongs. *Example:*

600 11 $a Longworth, Alice Roosevelt, $d 1884-1980.
600 11 $a Roosevelt, Theodore, $d 1858-1919 $x Family.
650 #1 $a Children of presidents.
650 #1 $a Legislators’ spouses.

4. Partial biography. To works about an individual person that are less than 50% biographical, assign only the name of the person, subdivided if appropriate by subdivisions listed in C 1110, and the appropriate topical headings. Do not assign headings to designate the class of persons, or the individual’s sex, ethnic group, association with an organization, etc. Examples of this type of work are critical works about individual artists, literary authors, philosophers, theologians, etc., as well as about the life and times of individual statesmen or rulers in which there is more about the history of the time and the life of the ruler.