

**BACKGROUND:** *It is customary to provide special numbers for biography in the general materials area under a topic whose class numbers have been expanded to any extent in the classification schedules. Although these numbers are called biography numbers, they are used for classifying various other kinds of works in addition to those that merely present facts concerning the personal life of an individual. Generally, these numbers are used for any work whose purpose it is to relate an individual (or group of individuals) to a topic. Such works may and often do give personal details, but they may also merely discuss the individual's activities, contributions, views, etc., relating to the topic in question. This instruction sheet presents general guidelines for classifying biographical works. For guidelines on classifying biographies of government officials, such as heads of state, governors, and legislators, see F 605.*

*For guidelines on assigning subject headings to biographical works, see H 1330. For fixed field coding, see Appendix F.*

**1. General rule.** Class biographical works, individual or collective, with the topic with which the biographee is most closely identified. Use the special biography numbers provided under the topic.

Class in CT (General biography) only works on individuals not identified with a special topic, and works of the type described in sec. 5.b., below.

**2. Establishing biography numbers.** Differing traditions have developed for the various classification schedules. Establish biography numbers according to the normal practices followed for the schedule in question. *Examples:*

In some schedules, such as the history schedules, it is customary to establish biography numbers under specific subtopics the first time they are required.

In some schedules, such as Class Q, it is customary to use the biography numbers provided under major disciplines or topics rather than creating biography numbers under highly specific subtopics.

In some schedules it is customary to class biography in the General works number when an expansion of the form caption area is not justified (cf. F 195, *Subarrangement within Disciplines*).

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3. **Form of captions.** When establishing biography numbers, provide numbers for both individual and collective biography as follows:

Biography  
Collective  
Individual, A-Z

Use these as standard captions unless the schedule in question consistently uses other standard captions.

Avoid using Cutter numbers to split a single class number; use decimals instead, e.g.

	Biography
915.49	Collective
915.5.A-Z	Individual, A-Z
[not	Biography
915.A1	Collective
915.A3-Z	Individual, A-Z]

### 4. *Collective vs. individual biography.*

**a. Collective biography.** Class as collective biography a work that discusses the lives and/or contributions of two or more individuals, if each individual is given substantial treatment in the work. Biographies that are about a single individual but give passing mention to friends, associates, etc., are not collective biographies.

*Note: Until 2013, a discrete section of the work had to be devoted to each individual for the work to be considered a collective biography.*

4. *Collective vs. individual biography. (Continued)*

**b. Individual biography.** Class as individual biography a continuous narrative that discusses the life of a single individual or the contributions of a single individual to a particular topic. Also class an autobiography as individual biography.

Treat as individual biography works of the type *My life with [a famous person]* as well as combined biographies of two closely related people, such as a husband and wife, brother and sister, etc. Class such works with the more illustrious person, unless the purpose of the work is clearly to describe the life of the latter, in which case class with the latter.

**Accounts of travels.** Do not, for classification purposes, treat accounts of travels as biographical or autobiographical unless a substantial portion of the text, i.e. 50% or more, is devoted to personal details of the life of the traveler.

**c. Single continuous text in which several disparate lives are discussed.** Class according to the intent of the author or publisher. If the apparent intent is to tell a single story with stress on one person, class the work as a biography of that person. If the intent is to discuss several lives in relation to a topic, family, place, etc., class the work as collective biography.

**d. Biographies of the members of one family.** Class as collective biography unless the schedule in question makes special provision for individual families.

*Note: Until 2013, biographies of the members of a single family were classed as individual biographies.*

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### 5. *Individual biography of persons with multi-faceted careers.*

*a. Emphasis on one career.* If the biography emphasizes one particular career, class the work with that topic. For example, class a biography of Albert Schweitzer as a musician in ML; Leonardo da Vinci as a scientist in Q.

*b. Discussion of several careers.* If the biography discusses several careers in which an individual was engaged, class with the topic with which the biographee is most closely associated. If, according to standard reference sources, no single career is predominant in the life of the individual, as in the case of Albert Schweitzer, class the work in CT.

### 6. *Individual biography in history schedules.*

*a. Where to class individual biography.* Class individual biography with special periods, reigns, or places following the principles listed below:

*(1) General history numbers.* Do not include provisions for individual biography with collective biography under the general history numbers of an individual country.

*(2) Local history numbers.* Class individual biography with local history unless the person was more prominent on the national than on the local level.

*(3) Reigns, administrations, etc.* Class biographies of persons of national stature with the Biography and memoirs number under a particular monarch's reign, a particular president's administration, etc. Alternatively, it is possible to class biographies of this type with numbers established under larger periods of a nation's history when it is not practical to group on the basis of individual rulers. For further information on biographies of heads of state and legislators, see F 605, sec. 1.

*(4) Time periods under local history.* Where individual localities are further subdivided by periods, including those using special tables inserted in the scheme, class individual biography with the appropriate period under local history.

**6. Individual biography in history schedules.** (Continued)

**b. Listing the names of individuals.** In general, do not submit proposals to list individual persons under biography numbers in the classification schedules. Exceptions are made to this provision when it is desirable:

- To illustrate scope by means of a representative sampling.
- To indicate persons with multi-faceted careers (i.e., they are entered in more than one location in the classification system).
- To bring out prominent public figures, long-reigning monarchs, outstanding prime ministers, etc.

**7. Individual biography tables.** Works classed in biography numbers may be further subarranged in accordance with an individual biography table. Some schedules, such as Classes E, N, and P, provide unique tables applicable to the specific schedule. For those classes for which a unique table is not provided, the following general table is used, provided that the name of the biographee is on the first Cutter:

**Biography table (biographee on first Cutter)**

.x	Cutter for the individual
.xA2	Collected works. By date
.xA25	Selected works. Selections. By date Including quotations
.xA3	Autobiography, diaries, etc. By date
.xA4	Letters. By date
.xA5	Speeches, essays, and lectures. By date Including interviews
.xA6-Z	Biography and criticism Including criticism of selected works, quotations, autobiography, letters, speeches, etc.

(The principles in the above "Including" notes are to be followed in biography tables in all classes.)

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### 7. *Individual biography tables.* (Continued)

*Note: When this general table is applied, the numbers for **Collected works, Selected works, and Speeches, essays, and lectures** are used only when the collection by the individual biographee is so general that the work cannot be classed with a specific topic and would otherwise be classed in A, such as the collected writings of a journalist on several topics. The table is more commonly applied for autobiography, correspondence, or biography and criticism.*

### 8. *Shelflisting.* For shelflisting procedures, see G 320.