



History

The way historians write biography is changing. Together with a push to recover marginalised lives has come growing interest in different approaches to both individual and group biography. Historians are turning to new sources like material culture and experimenting with approaches that include speculation and even fiction. They are increasingly combining their biographical writing with reflections on their own positionality. And they are exploring the potential of alternative structures: moving away, for example, from traditional chronological narratives.

In this exercise, we invite you to write a short biography of an individual or group of individuals. In particular, we encourage you to think creatively about your biography's subject(s), sources, and style: what approach might best illuminate your subject(s) and the time period he/she/they lived in?

There is no set reading for this task, but if you're interested in history and biography, you might find inspiration in one of the following:

- Barbara Caine, *Biography and History*
- John Hatcher, *The Black Death*
- Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture*
- Julia Laite, *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey*

These books can often be accessed for free through your school or local library; however, we understand that not everyone will be able to easily access these. They are not required reading. Part of academic research is working with what is available to you and acknowledging its limitations.