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# Resources: Understanding Point of View




## Introduction

The resources for this module will describe how the perspectives of the people involved in historical events are presented differently depending on the type of source. The videos and readings for this week will help prepare you to respond to the discussion about biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and biopics and will be helpful when writing your profile of a historical figure.




## Required Resources

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**Video:** [Biographies, Autobiographies, and Memoirs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbL2BycPxkc)  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbL2BycPxkc>) (3:04)

This SNHU video compares the similarities and differences between different types of life writing. This resource explains factors that shape the historical representations of people and events. This video will help you participate in this week's discussion and write your profile. As you watch, consider the following:


- How might an autobiography, memoir, or biography provide information about the historical event or subject for your project?
- What will you need to consider about the perspective of this source?

**Reading:** [Memoir](https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=87323706&site=eds-)  (<https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=87323706&site=eds->

live&scope=site)


This Shapiro Library resource from the *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature* defines memoir as a “personal account of one’s past experiences.” The resource gives examples of different types of memoirs, including historical memoirs. Because the categories overlap, each type has some element of a historic event. This article will help you participate in this week’s discussion and write your profile. As you read, consider the following:

- If a memoir is a “method of understanding the self,” can it also be a way to understand a historic event?
- What makes a memoir a primary source about a historic event?

**Reading:** Autobiography  (<https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=89403432&site=eds-live&scope=site>)


This Shapiro Library resource from the *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature* defines autobiography as a “a book about a person written by that person.” The resource explains what makes an autobiography different from a memoir. This article will help you participate in this week’s discussion and write your profile. As you read, consider the following:

- How does an autobiography incorporate primary sources?
- Why would an autobiography include secondary sources?

**Reading:** Biography  (<https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=119214337&site=eds-live&scope=site>)

This Shapiro Library resource from the *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature* defines biography as a “written account of a person’s life ... written by someone other than the subject of the book.” The resource describes four types of biography. This article will help you participate in this week’s discussion and write your profile. As you read, consider the following:

- Which of the four types would include the most primary and/or secondary sources?
- Why would historians debate the value of biographies when evaluating history?

**Reading:** Prioritizing Truth Over Accuracy  (<https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ulh&AN=153991663&site=eds-live&scope=site>)

In this Shapiro Library article from *Entertainment Weekly*, screenwriter and director Aaron Sorkin describes choices made in the films *The Social Network* and *The Ricardos* that change the facts of events but emphasize the experience of the people who are the focus of the film. Sorkin discusses how nonfiction films may need to “mess with accuracy” to tell their story. This

Some discusses how nonfiction films may need to "mess with accuracy" to tell their story. This article will help you participate in this week's discussion. As you read, consider the following:

- What does this author mean by the statement "by being accurate we might be obscuring the truth"?
- Do you agree or disagree that being factually inaccurate in a nonfiction film is "perverting history"?

**Reading:** Bias in Historical Description, Interpretation, and Explanation 

(<https://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.2677997&site=eds-live&scope=site>)

This Shapiro Library article from the journal *History and Theory* discusses personal and cultural bias, including the impact of each on history. It also discusses the four common ways in which historical writing may be biased. This article will help you participate in this week's discussion and write your profile. As you read, consider the following:


- How are personal bias and cultural bias different?
- When are biased descriptions unjust?


**Video:** How Historical Narratives Are Constructed 

(<https://www.kunhardtfilmfoundation.org/lessons/lesson-three-challenging-the-myth-of-the-great-emancipator/interviews/how-historical-narratives-are-constructed-thread>) (16:48)

This video segment from the documentary series *Lincoln's Dilemma* discusses how the myth of Abraham Lincoln as the Great Emancipator is a simplistic view that overlooks other qualities of Lincoln as a leader. This view of Lincoln since the late 1800s is compared to criticism of Lincoln by abolitionists in the early 1860s. This video will help you participate in this week's discussion and write your profile. As you watch, consider the following:

- Who are historic figures that you consider legendary?
- How could you learn more about the life behind their myth?

A closed-captioned version of this video is available: How Historical Narratives Are Constructed (CC)  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu9Sg4x0AOE>)

**Video:** The Real Story of Rosa Parks -- and Why We Need to Confront Myths About Black History 

([https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_ikard\\_the\\_real\\_story\\_of\\_rosa\\_parks\\_and\\_why\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_confront\\_myths\\_about\\_black\\_history](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_ikard_the_real_story_of_rosa_parks_and_why_we_need_to_confront_myths_about_black_history)) (18:05)

This TEDx talk given by a historian explains how Rosa Parks's autobiography told a more complex story than the "mythologized" bus boycott. The speaker explains how autobiography can be a means to take control of the narrative. The video emphasizes the significance of

can be a means to take control of the narrative. The video emphasizes the significance of perspective in recognizing the multiple dimensions of a historical event. This video will help you participate in this week's discussion and write your profile. As you watch, consider the following:

- What is your reaction to the difference between the myth and the autobiographical account of Rosa Parks?
- How are myths created about historic figures?




## Additional Support (Optional)

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**Library Resource:** Guide to Basic Historical Research at the Shapiro Library 

(<https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=92272&p=596124>)

This Shapiro Library guide provides links to sources focused on historical research, including a list of recommended databases to search for articles, a list of reference sources to find general information about a topic, and a list of primary sources to find artifacts on a historical event or subject.

**Library Resource:** Be a Research Skeptic 

(<https://libguides.snhu.edu/researchskeptic/home>)

This SNHU Shapiro Library guide introduces you to the SIFT method for evaluating your sources. SIFT is an acronym for each step: (1) Stop and reflect, (2) Investigate the source, (3) Find supporting evidence, (4) Trace claims. This resource will help you with this week's profile, as well as the research you will do in this course and other courses. There is even a voluntary quiz students can take to earn a badge if you choose.

 Reflect in ePortfolio

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## Activity Details

Task: View this topic



Explore these resources, which will help prepare you to respond to the discussion about biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and biopics and will be helpful when writing your profile of a historical figure.



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