

Say Hello to
your very own book of
Quotes



QuotationsBook

Quotes about Biography

from QuotationsBook.com

Biography is one of the new terrors of death.

- Arbuthnot, John

When my journal appears, many statues must come down.

- Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington

Biography should be written by an acute enemy.

- Balfour, Arthur James

Just as there is nothing between the admirable omelet and the intolerable, so with autobiography.

- Belloc, Hilaire

In writing biography, fact and fiction shouldn't be mixed. And if they are, the fictional points should be printed in red ink, the facts printed in black ink.

- Bowen, Catherine Drinker

Show me a character whose life arouses my curiosity, and my flesh begins crawling with suspense.

- Brodie, Fawn M.

A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one.

- Carlyle, Thomas

History is the essence of innumerable biographies.

- Carlyle, Thomas

If those gentlemen would let me alone I should be much obliged to them. I would say, as Shakespeare would say... Sweet Friend, for Jesus sake forbear.

- Carlyle, Thomas

No sooner does a great man depart, and leave his character as public property, than a crowd of little men rushes towards it. There they are gathered together, blinking up to it with such vision as they have, scanning it from afar, hovering round it this way and that, each cunningly endeavoring, by all arts, to catch some reflex of it in the little mirror of himself.

- Carlyle, Thomas

Read no history: nothing but biography, for that is life without theory.

- Disraeli, Benjamin

The secret of biography resides in finding the link between talent and achievement. A biography seems irrelevant if it doesn't discover the overlap between what the individual

did and the life that made this possible. Without discovering that, you have shapeless happenings and gossip.

- Edel, Leon

Great geniuses have the shortest biographies.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

There is properly no history; only biography.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Biography is history seen through the prism of a person.

- Fischer, Louis

Biography is: a system in which the contradictions of a human life are unified.

- Gasset, Jose Ortega Y

The surrounding that householders crave are glorified autobiographies.

- Gibblings, T. H.

Biography is a very definite region bounded on the north by history, on the south by fiction, on the east by obituary, and on the west by tedium.

- Guedalla, Philip

An autobiography is a preemptive strike against biographers.

- Harris, Barbara G.

I am opposed to writing about the private lives of living authors and psychoanalyzing them while they are alive. Criticism is getting all mixed up with a combination of the Junior F.B.I.-men, discards from Freud and Jung and a sort of Columnist peep-hole and missing laundry list school. Every young English professor sees gold in them dirty sheets now. Imagine what they can do with the soiled sheets of four legal beds by the same writer and you can see why their tongues are slavering.

- Hemingway, Ernest

If the reviewing of books be... an ungentle craft, the making of them is, for the most part, a dishonest one -- and that department of literature which ought to be entrusted to those only who are distinguished for their moral qualities is, not infrequently, in the hands of authors totally devoid of good taste, good feeling, and generous sentiment. The writers of Lives have, in our time, assumed a license not enjoyed by their more scrupulous predecessors -- for they interweave the adventures of the living with the memoirs of the dead; and, pretending to portray the peculiarities which sometimes mark the man of genius, they invade the privacy and disturb the peace of his surviving associates.

- Hobhouse, John Cam

A biography is like a handshake down the years, that can become an arm-wrestle.

- Holmes, Richard

Many heroes lived before Agamemnon; but all are unknown and unwept, extinguished in everlasting night, because they have no spirited chronicler.

- Horace

Nobody can write the life of a man but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him.

- Johnson, Samuel

Anyone who profits from the experience of others probably writes biographies.

- Jones

On the trail of another man, the biographer must put up with finding himself at every turn; any biography uneasily shelters an autobiography within it.

- Kendall, Paul Murray

A great biography should, like the close of a great drama, leave behind it a feeling of serenity. We collect into a small bunch the flowers, the few flowers, which brought sweetness into a life, and present it as an offering to an accomplished destiny. It is the dying refrain of a completed song, the final verse of a finished poem.

- Maurois, Andre

Memoirs are the backstairs of history.

- Meredith, George

The first thing to be done by a biographer in estimating character is to examine the stubs of his victim's check-books.

- Mitchell, Silas Weir

I have not much interest in anyone's personal history after the tenth year, not even my own. Whatever one was going to be was all prepared before that.

- Porter, Katherine Anne

There ain't nothing that breaks up homes, country, and nations like somebody publishing their memoirs.

- Rogers, Will

The facts of a person's life will, like murder, come out.

- Sherry, Norman

The immense majority of human biographies are a gray transit between domestic spasm and oblivion.

- Steiner, George

Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man. The biography of the man himself cannot be written.

- Twain, Mark

There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is an impossibility. Inside of the dullest exterior there is a drama, a comedy, and a tragedy.

- Twain, Mark

There never was a good biography of a good novelist. There couldn't be. He is too many people, if he's any good.

- Unknown, Source

For what is a poem, but a hazardous attempt at self-understanding. It is the deepest part of autobiography.

- Warren, Robert Penn

Only when one has lost all curiosity about the future has one reached the age to write an autobiography.

- Waugh, Evelyn

To write the lives of the great in separating them from their works necessarily ends by above all stressing their pettiness, because it is in their work that they have put the best of themselves.

- Weil, Simone

All good biography, as all good fiction, comes down to the study of original sin, of our

inherent disposition to choose death when we ought to choose life.

- West, Rebecca

Just how difficult it is to write biography can be reckoned by anybody who sits down and considers just how many people know the real truth about his or her love affairs.

- West, Rebecca

Formerly we used to canonize our heroes. The modern method is to vulgarize them. Cheap editions of great books may be delightful, but cheap editions of great men are absolutely detestable.

- Wilde, Oscar

Biography is a higher gossip.

- Winder, Robert

Almost any biographer, if he respects facts, can give us much more than another fact to add to our collection. He can give us the creative fact; the fertile fact; the fact that suggests and engenders.

- Woolf, Virginia

There will be some trouble about 'biography' because I have never troubled myself to supply particulars of my early life to any writer.

- Pinero, Sir Arthur Wing



QuotationsBook