

# Biography Author Guidelines

2017



## Introduction

Congratulations! You have been chosen to write a biographical article for the new *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (ESDA). Your selection indicates that you have distinguished yourself as an expert on this individual or are in the best position to gain expertise and thus can write an authoritative article accessible to the church and the public. This article will be the go-to source on this person and should meet the high standard that all ESDA articles will achieve: thoroughly researched, primary-source based, information-rich, clearly written, accurate, honest, comprehensive, engaging, authoritative, and written for both Adventists and the wider public. These criteria should be kept in mind throughout the article-writing process. This guide will take you through a step-by-step process to help you produce such an article. More resources for ESDA authors can be found at this link (<https://goo.gl/YklFzg>).

## Step One: Orientation

Be sure to orient yourself with the word length and due date of your assignment so you can finish on time and within the parameters. It would be optimal to finish before the due date but only if this is not to the detriment of quality. Your editor has sent you an email stating the category of your biography, the word length and due date:

<u>Biographies</u>	<u>Word Length</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Short	Less than 500	6 months
Medium	500 – 1,500	8 months
Long	1,000 – 3,000	1 year
Eminent	4,000 – 8,000	18 months
Preeminent	8,000 – 12,000	2 years

**Short:** A person with local significance.

**Medium:** A person with regional significance.

**Long:** A person with significance throughout a division/divisions.

**Eminent:** A person whose life has significantly influenced the world church or impacted the wider world.

**Preeminent:** A person of historical significance whose life greatly shaped the world church.

In the case of married couples, and especially missionary couples, the ESDA is making a concerted effort to place proper emphasis on the contribution of both spouses. In cases when a couple served as pioneer missionaries in a cross-cultural context, authors are encouraged to write a joint article on the couple rather than just on the man, as is usually the case. In addition, when both members of a couple warrant separate articles but there is considerable overlap in the content of both articles, authors should combine these into one joint article. This would apply in cases in which the woman had a significant role but generally when the couple served as a team. Exceptions may be made in cases which the lives of the couple were sufficiently lived apart or when the remarriage or longevity of one spouse would warrant a separate article.

In this first step, take the time to read model biographical article on F.C. Gilbert (<https://goo.gl/igG3y1>), noting the following:

- Begin the first sentence with the person's name then a few words on his/her main contribution to the church (Example: *Frederick Carnes Cohen, pioneering Jewish Adventist evangelist, administrator, and author, was born on September 30, 1867...*)
- The entire coverage of the person's life
- The specificity of information, particularly dates and names
- The chronological sequence of the article
- The use of American English
- The use of subheadings in articles over 1,000 words
- The Contribution section that concludes the article
- The use of endnotes to document important points
- Inclusion of a Sources section
- The endnotes and Sources section adhere to the Turabian style of formatting

## Step Two: Research

### I. Preliminary Research

If you have written anything previously on the person, consult your work again in order to refresh yourself. Next, read the 1996 *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* article on the person, if there is one. Reviewing this source is just so you can know what has been written on your subject in the previous *Encyclopedia*, not to reproduce the entry. In fact, one of the reasons for the ESDA project is to update research from the 1996 *Encyclopedia*, correct inaccuracies, fill in gaps of information, and publish new articles based on the primary sources now available to us, reflective of current understanding.

### II. Web Research

Since your subject is necessarily deceased (the ESDA does not accept standalone biographical articles on living persons), perform a search for him/her on the SDA Obituary Index (<https://goo.gl/pt2i11>).

- Because of possible variations, first try the person's full name, then just his/her last name and initial (or, if uncommon, just the last name).
- The bulk of search results will be in periodicals which can be found on the ASTR website (<https://goo.gl/2ZwNE4>).
- For example, an obituary search for William Spicer yields the result "Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 1952 Nov 13 1952." The quickest way to access this issue is to go to <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/default.aspx>, select "Periodicals," and then "Review and Herald." Next, in the bottom left hand corner under "Key Filters," type in 11/13/1952 in the "Doc Date" and select "Apply." This will take you directly to the issue.

A Google search (or whichever search engine you use) should be done next.

- You can do this by first Googling the person's name, being sure to try variations, like the full name, initials, maiden name, married name, etc.
- Also, do a search for the person with "SDA" or "Seventh-day Adventist" after the name.
- Scroll through at least the first five pages of hits to make sure you do not miss anything.
- Also, under the search window, click on BOOKS (you may need to click MORE and select it from the dropdown menu); there you can see if any books have been written on your subject, as well as if s/he has been cited in books.

Now that the more general avenues of research have been explored, it is time to get more detailed. The ASTR website (<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/default.aspx>) is an important destination. For the most detailed, and probably informative search on your subject, search for his/her name in the periodicals (<https://goo.gl/2ZwNE4>). This search should also be performed on the Adventist Digital Library (<http://adventistdigitallibrary.org/>), although there will be some overlap with the ASTR Online Archives.

Here are a couple of tips for doing this, taking William Ambrose Spicer as an example.

- First, search by his most common handle: W.A. Spicer
- Type the following into your search engine (<https://goo.gl/2ZwNE4>): “W A Spicer”
- You will get 7,100 hits, but this will not be all of them; if you want to be supremely thorough, type in “Spicer.” This yields 12,100 hits. This second search will yield most of the variations on his name that the “W A Spicer” search missed. Although many of the results for Spicer will concern a person with the surname of Spicer other than William Ambrose or the school in India, most of these will be about William Ambrose Spicer.

Although it is time consuming, you may want to check every hit. There are several ways you can do this, and how you do it depends on your research style.

- Document Decade: On the right side of the page is a column titled Document Decade. This will sort your results chronologically, which is the format that biographical articles are typically written. Once you choose a decade, you can then limit your search to a year.
- Periodicals: Certain periodicals will be better sources than others. For Spicer, the best periodical with the most primary source materials will be the *Review and Herald* (today’s *Adventist Review*). You can open the *Review* hits by decade in the general search or do a search for Spicer in the *Reviews* (<https://goo.gl/CV5X8V>). To save time, view your search results by clicking on the icon of the paper with the magnifying glass to the left of the periodical line. This will take you directly to the hit in the magazine.

This search should also be performed on the Adventist Digital Library (<http://adventistdigitallibrary.org/>), although there will be some overlap with the ASTR Online Archives.

Depending on the person you are researching for your article, you can do additional searches in the following places on the ASTR website:

- SDA Yearbooks (<https://goo.gl/mkwfPC>): The *Yearbooks* are especially vital in your research for employees of the church. They will tell you the position and years (roughly) your person worked for the denomination. You can do a search over all of the *Yearbooks* in the link above, although bear in mind that there were no distinct *Yearbooks* from 1895-1903.
- The James White Library (<http://jewel.andrews.edu/search~S9/X>) and its Digital Commons (<http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/>) are additional resources that often yield excellent search results.
- ASTR Books (<https://goo.gl/vqPhP1>)

- ASTR Minutes (<https://goo.gl/83cAjD>): Particularly the General Conference Committee minutes will be helpful as these are primary sources that deal with calls and appointments. The NAD Minutes are similarly useful.
- Ancestry.com: This website largely has primary source documents like birth records, marriage and death records, census records, and immigration and passport forms for the United States and Britain. Do several types of searches here to get the best results on your subjects. Note that for whatever document you use, there is citation information provided by Ancestry on the webpage in which the document is accessed.

### *III. Visiting Research*

Of course, there are still some sources for research that cannot be accessed on the web. Contact every archive, library, or museum that may have information on your subject. Schools (mostly colleges/universities) and churches could also have information or records on an individual as well. If the person was a denominational employee, the administrative structure in which s/he worked may have employment files or papers. Exhaust all possibilities.

In your research, be sure to prioritize correspondence. Ask the archivist, librarian, or records manager if they possess any letters to, from, or about your subject. These can be the most revealing of primary sources, especially for figures before the digital age.

Whenever possible and reasonable, make copies or scans of every document you use in your research. When entering the location of a document, err on the side of rigor: include the institution, the office or department, box, folder, record group number, date, page number, etc. As far as citations are concerned, each archives or records center usually has its own style guidelines; please adhere to them. If they do not have unique guidelines, follow Turabian.

### *IV. Interviews*

If your subject was born in the twentieth century, there are likely people still alive who knew him/her. Particularly, relatives of your subject can help with key dates and other information. Please consult the ESDA Oral History Interview Guide (<https://goo.gl/xQR1iM>) for instructions on how to conduct an interview.

The final step in the research phase is to pursue any source not specified in the other steps. This could be newspapers, websites, media, social media, unpublished articles, etc. It is a good idea to ask others about possible sources.

Important note: Your article must be based on primary sources. Since the ESDA will be a digital resource, every effort should be made to digitize (scan) and preserve the *unique and significant primary sources* used to write your article. Please follow the instructions in “Preserving Primary Sources” found here (<https://goo.gl/YkIFzg>).

### **Step Three: Writing**

The outline below will vary from article to article because every person’s life is different. For instance, some people were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church late in life. Others were married before they began college or were married in their fifties and never attended college. Wherever the events outlined below fall, if the details are relevant and can be obtained, they should be included and placed in a sequence that makes the most sense for that individual.

Above all, note that the ESDA favors chronological order in a biography: i.e., write about the events of person's life in the order in which they occur. Begin each article with a sentence summarizing the individual's contributions. When including dates in your article, please try as often as possible to include day, month, and year. Endnotes adhering to the Turabian style should be used (<https://goo.gl/q1iyjt>)

Please note that the components of a biographical article outlined below will mainly apply to longer biographies. For many short articles, it is unnecessary to track down and include all the details outlined below for a person.

## I. Early Life

## II. Education and Marriage

## III. Career/Ministry

## IV. Later Life

## V. Legacy

### *I. Early Life*

- Full name: first, middle, last name (Although it is the convention in a certain era, give the person's name in full and do not just list his/her initials)
- Birth date: day, month, year
- Place of birth: town/city/village, country (In some instances, the birth location will have changed. Please include the current name in parenthesis.)
- Parents' names and backgrounds, including their life dates
- Birth order and number of siblings, and if significant, sibling's names
- Places where childhood was spent
- Primary and secondary schools attended
- Conversion or baptism: year and person who converted or baptized them, along with any interesting information about it or circumstances surrounding it

### *II. Education and Marriage*

- Education: college, graduate, post-graduate, training schools, seminary, etc.
- Marriage: date (day, month, year), place of wedding
- Spouse: full name, life dates, background
- Children: number, names, life dates

### *III. Career/Ministry*

- Positions held, including the years
- Firsts/Pioneer status
- Missionary posts
- Ministries started
- Baptisms
- Publications
- Distinctions
- Other accomplishments

#### IV. *Later Life*

- Retirement details: year of retirement, place, notable items during retirement (e.g., honors, awards, accomplishments)
- Death date: day, month, year
- Place of death: town/city/village, country

V. *Contribution/Legacy* (For short biographies, contribution/legacy should be one or two sentences; for longer biographies, an entire section)

- How did his/her life impact the SDA Church and its mission?
- How did his/her life impact society?

### **Step Four: Style and Format**

Use this section with the ESDA Model Articles on F.C. Gilbert and the Documentation Manual (<https://goo.gl/YklFzg>).

#### Writing Style

Since the ESDA will be a General Conference-based publication, American English will be used. Adhering to this can be most easily accomplished by setting Microsoft Word to American English (Select “File,” then “Options,” then “Language,” then “English [United States]”).

#### Title and Name

At the top of the first page, include the name of the article (which is the subject) and your name under the title as you would like it to appear in print.

#### Spacing

Include an extra line between paragraphs and italicize subheadings. After the period at the end of each sentence, only insert one space, not two.

#### Images

Please note that there should be *no* images (i.e., pictures, photos, portraits) whatsoever in the article. Images will be handled separately (see the document “Preserving Primary Sources” at <https://goo.gl/YklFzg>).

#### Documentation

Each ESDA article will have two kinds of citation formats: endnotes and sources, each in the Turabian style (<https://goo.gl/b0zsB>). Use the ESDA Documentation Manual for quick access to the Turabian style.

#### **Endnotes**

Endnotes should be used when an author wants to provide evidence for a point that may be questioned or contested. They should also be supplied for a direct quote or paraphrase and unique information from a particular source. Endnotes should not be used in the case of generally established facts. Neither should they be used to advance an argument; this should only be done in the body of the text.

Information that *should* be cited with endnotes include:

- The date the first Seventh-day Adventist entered a country
- The date the first person was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a city, country, or region
- The date an individual was converted or baptized
- Correspondence (letters) between people
- Committee or board minutes or actions
- Statistical figures such as membership, enrollment, employee count, etc.
- Direct quotations or paraphrases
- Date construction began on an institution
- Official church statements
- Any controversial or disputed point

Information should *not* be cited with endnotes include:

- Established dates such as when the General Conference was established (1863) or when Ellen White died (1915)
- Generally known facts about historical events like “World War II concluded in 1945” or “Martin Luther posted the 95 theses in 1517”
- Points that are used to advance an argument or an extensive explanation

Endnotes can be inserted in Microsoft Word by selecting “References” from the top of the menu and choosing “Insert Endnote.” Endnotes should be numerical. This is done by selecting the “Footnotes” dropdown menu, going to the “Number Format,” and choosing “1, 2, 3,…” and clicking “Apply.” Note that Word can also convert sources to Turabian style by selecting the “Reference” tab in the ribbon and then selecting from the “Style” dropdown menu.

### Sources

The Sources section is similar to a bibliography, except that it is comprised of a listing of all the sources used to write the article. To be thorough, some authors may wish to include sources on the subject that they did not use in writing or researching the article but which could be helpful to the reader for further research. The Sources page will be the final part of the article and will follow the Turabian style.

### Things to Keep in Mind While Writing

Check your article for the following pitfalls to which Adventist writers are particularly susceptible. Remove or edit if you come across them:

**Spiritualizing or moralizing:** To reflect on or express opinions about something in terms of right and wrong, especially in a self-righteous or tiresome way.

Example: “Bob Smith was often assailed by temptation but never gave in to the devil. Like Bob, we too can be overcomers.”

**Use of Adventist nomenclature:** Avoid using terms and phrases that only Adventists would know without introducing and explaining them before they are employed.



Example: ABC, AYS, campaign, crusade, lost (a person who has not accepted Christ), MV, present truth, probation, remnant, spirit of prophecy, Sabbath School, SDA, Sunday Law, the message, the world, third/three angels' message(s), etc.

**Revealing bias toward your subject:**

Example: “Bob Smith’s motives were pure.”

**Heavy judgmentalism:** Akin to bias, this is negatively judging an action of your subject.

Example: “Bob Smith’s intentions were evil.”

**Too much information:** ESDA articles should err on the side of more information but listing a subject’s favorite color, pet’s names, and eating habits is too much information and should be left out.

**Mythography:** Don’t perpetuate myths about a person. If you *cannot* find evidence that the person baptized one million in an evangelistic effort, then do not include it.

**Hyperbole:** An exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis.

Example: “Bob Smith is the greatest teacher the Adventist church has known.”

“Bob Smith is the most controversial theologian in Adventist history.”

**Personal reminiscences:** Keep out any personal experiences you had with the article subject, even if s/he was a relative. Separate from the main article, there will be a section called “Memory Statements” in which personal memories from site visitors will be featured.

**Umpiring:** Avoid taking sides in historical disputes; retain historical detachment.

**Presentism:** Presentism is “the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts.” ESDA articles should not stand in condemnation on the one hand or glorification on the other of what Adventists did in the past. Neither should what was done be used to win a current debate. Do not be critical just for the sake of being critical. Articles should determine what actually happened, why the article subject(s) acted the way s/he did, and what lessons can be drawn from it.

**Step Five: Editing**

Once you have finished writing the article, it is time to edit, which means reviewing your article for content, structure, quality, and flow. The editing process is to ensure the best possible article. Take your article through the steps below, reading it afresh with that particular step in mind.

1. Content: Pretend that you know nothing about the person and are reading about him/her for the first time in this article. Are you well informed about the person after you read it? Is the article clear? Is it logical? Does it flow?
2. Accuracy: Are the details of the person’s life as outlined in the *Detailed Format* section above included? Are dates and names accurate? Are other details correct?
3. Structure and flow: Does the article follow a chronological order? Is any life event out of order? Are your ideas logically organized within each paragraph and within the article as a whole? Does your writing make sense to both Adventist and non-Adventist readership?

4. **Quality:** Are you concise? Is your sentence structure easy to follow or confusing? Do transitions between sentences and paragraphs make sense?
5. Send the article to a friend or relative to read who has never heard of the article subject, and ask them for their feedback: specifically, does the article provide a good overview of the person's life?

### **Step Six: Proofreading**

ESDA articles will lose much of their impact and respect if the grammar is poor. Please do not skip this step; your article will be returned to you to do it.

1. Read the article, looking for the following items:
  - a. Are there any run-on sentences?
  - b. Do I use periods and commas properly?
  - c. Do the nouns and verbs agree in tense and number?
  - d. Have I made proper use of articles (a, an, the)?
  - e. Do I use words correctly?
2. Read the article again, this time out loud, asking the above questions.
3. Have a spouse, friend, or colleague proofread the article. Extra eyes usually pick up things that you have not.

### **Step Seven: Submit**

Each individual who writes an article for the *Encyclopedia* will have an Author Page on the ESDA website. This page will include a brief biography and links to all of the ESDA articles that the author wrote. Please submit in a *separate* Word document from the main article a bio of yourself no longer than three sentences. This can include any information you like but usually covers things like birthplace, education, career, accomplishments, publications, hobbies, and family. Please send this bio to your editor.

You are now ready to submit your article. There are two ways in which this can be done.

1. If you have completed your article before the due date, email your editor notifying him that you are ready to submit. The editor will then send you a link that you will click. Follow the instructions to upload the article.
2. Around the time of the due date, an email will arrive from your editor with a link and submission instructions. After you have uploaded the article, you will receive an email confirmation that it has been received, and then you will wait for the editor to contact you further.

Thank you for your contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* and the World Church!