



DICTIONARY OF IRISH BIOGRAPHY

Guidance for DIB Contributors

The brief guidance below is intended to give contributors a sense of the basic structure and expected content of an entry for the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. If you have queries regarding any element of this guide, please contact the Managing Editor.

1. Content essentials

Biographies should contain the following basic information in the first paragraph or two:

- Name in ‘Surname, Forename’ format.
- Birth and death years.
- Occupation (what the subject is best known for).
- Birth: Full date and place.
- Father: Full name, occupation and place of residence/birth.
- Mother: Full name (if known by married surname include maiden name in brackets e.g. (née Murphy)), occupation or family background.
- Family: Subject’s place in family and number of brothers and sisters.

In practice, this might look like the following:

Andrews, Eamonn (1922–87), broadcaster, was born 19 December 1922 at 11 Synge Street, Dublin, eldest among five surviving children (two sons and three daughters; another son died in infancy) of William Andrews, an Electricity Supply Board (ESB) carpenter, and Margaret Andrews (née Farrell). During his childhood the family moved to a new corporation house on St Thomas Road.

Where birth and parentage details are more sparse, usually for older subjects, the following is appropriate:

McCracken, Alexander (d. 1730), presbyterian minister and non-juror, was born in either Scotland or Ireland, possibly in Co. Antrim; nothing is known of his family.

The remainder of the biography should then contain the following details:

- Education: Places of education from primary onward (with dates of attendance/graduation), with levels of educational attainment noted.
- Career: Roles held, including start and finish dates of appointments, imprisonment places and terms, etc. (chronological); an assessment of subject's significance in their field; personality and personal relationships if relevant to understanding their career.
- Residence: Principal place(s) of residence throughout subject's life.
- Financial position if relevant.
- Years of significant civil, academic or military achievements/promotions. Be as precise with dates of offices as possible (e.g., appointed Minister for Defence, 10 January 1922).
- Marriage(s)/relationships/children: Year of marriage, full name of spouse (names and occupations of his/her parents). Spouse occupation/notable achievements. Number of sons and daughters. Spouse's other children if any.
- Significant works (literary, artistic, notable research or publications) should be referenced. If there is a large quantity of them, provide only best known and give information as to where a comprehensive bibliography can be found.
- Death: Place and date. Information about cause of death should be minimal unless relevant to biography. Provide location of funeral and burial place.
- Tributes: Location of portraits, statues, monuments.
- Papers: Location of subject's papers, artefacts, other relevant bequests.
- Reference works in chronological order (see note below on sources).

2. Formatting and DIB editorial style

- Text: Please provide text in Times 12pt, left aligned font with 1.5 line spacing.
- Name: Each entry starts with the subject's name in 'Surname, Forename(s)' format followed by dates in brackets. Include middle names if available. If the person is known commonly by another name or shortened name, include that in single quote marks within brackets. So, for example: Yeats, Elizabeth Corbet ('Lollie') (1868–1940).

- Placenames: the form adopted by the Irish Ordnance Survey should be used.

3. Sources

- Quotations are used sparingly, and extended quotations are not to be included. Cite quotation sources in brackets directly after a quote in text, usually in (Surname, Year) format.
- Information gained from personal knowledge, a family member or someone who knew the deceased should be labelled as such in the sources section.
- List all source material, both primary and secondary, used in compiling the entry. These should be placed together in a chronological list at the end of the entry. Sources are separated from the main article under the heading 'Sources'. They are presented as one continuous line with chronological entries separated by semi-colons. A full stop is not used at the end of the sources list. **Footnotes are not used.**
- The title of books should be italicised and presented in the following form:

Danny Mansergh, *Grattan's failure. Parliamentary opposition and the people in Ireland 1779–1800* (2005), 74–7

Place of publication should not be given unless the reader will be misled or hindered without that information. Page numbers should be given where they will help the reader; they are not necessary for reference works or for works in which the subject is frequently mentioned.

The title of articles should be in roman between single quotation marks, and the title of journals, published pamphlets and newspapers should be italicised. Volume numbers should be in small roman figures.

David A. Fleming, 'Patriots and politics in Navan, 1753–5', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 144 (Nov. 2009), 502–21

Newspaper articles are not referenced in detail, but rather the relevant publication name and date is provided, e.g.,

Irish Times, 17 Sept. 1957

The citing of manuscript material should include the archive and collection, e.g.,

National Archives of Ireland, Rebellion papers 620/20/33

4. Further information:

- House Style Guide: this provides detailed information on various conventions that will be applied by the editors related to abbreviations, capitalisation, dates, numbers, punctuation, naming conventions, referencing and other such matters.
- Abbreviation Conventions: this contains a list of DIB-specific abbreviation conventions that may be applied to entries. For reference it also contains a list of bibliographic abbreviation conventions applied to earlier entries to the Dictionary (pre-2020).

Both documents are available on the DIB's [Editorial Guidelines webpage](#).