

RECOMMENDED READING

The story of Jonas Salk and the development of the polio vaccine has been told many times. Biographies for young readers abound. Most are reasonable although they frequently repeat misconceptions and inaccuracies that have appeared in the press, in other biographies or have otherwise somehow become “common knowledge.” The following books stand out as particularly accurate and reliable sources for both students and the general public.

Carter, Richard. Breakthrough: The Saga of Jonas Salk (Trident Press, 1966).
Intended for adults, this is the first and most accurate presentation of the history of the development of the killed poliovirus vaccine. Carter had direct access to all of the people involved in the story and provides extensive documentation of his sources.

Curtis, Robert H., M.D. Medicine Great Lives (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993).

Durrett, Deanne. Inventors and Creators: Jonas Salk (KidHaven Press, 2002).
This book is intended for beginning readers. It is accurate and avoids common errors that have appeared and frequently get repeated in such books as well as in those for older students.

Kluger, Jeffrey. Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Conquest of Polio (Putnam, 2004).
This historical drama, written for adults, is very well-researched and well-documented. Although not intended to be a historical treatise, it is in fact a reliable source of accurate information. Primary sources for factual material are clearly identified and the dramatized portions are based on careful research into the personalities involved.

McPherson, Stephanie Sammartino, Jonas Salk: Conquering Polio (Lerner Publications, 2002).
Although intended for young readers, this book is scientifically and historically accurate and well balanced. It is an excellent choice for adults looking for an overview that can be read quickly and easily.

Salk, Darrell. “Jonas Salk” in Milestones of the 20th Century (Grolier, 1999, pp. 80-81).

Salk, Jonas. Interview <<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/sal0int-1>> (Academy of Achievement, 1991).
This first person interview, including video and audio clips, is highly recommended as a resource for student projects.

Tocci, Salvatore. Jonas Salk: Creator of the Polio Vaccine (Enslow Publishers, 2003).
This biography for young readers is also accurate and avoids many common errors.