

In general terms, public history is a professional field of history conducted outside of the realms of academia. Denise Meringolo offers one explanation as historical practice within institutions, such as museums and national parks, with an active role of the state in order to expand federal authority. It is also a discipline that encompasses diverse opinions and public spheres as intimate as local libraries. However, understanding public history to its full extent is also complicated. Lyle Dick suggests that legitimate public history depends upon either writing “authoritative texts” for an audience, or inciting the public’s interpretation of an historical issue. Therefore, public history involves an exchange between presenting narratives through exhibits or films, and splintering off into people’s own histories told in various ways (to which Paul Ashton describes as the “atomization” of history). Overall, whether you visit the Canadian War Museum or the next time you go on Ancestry.ca, public history is in fact, all around you.