

Profile story

For this assignment, you will be required to write a personality profile about a person you do not know personally.

INTERVIEWS: You must talk to the person you're profiling and at least one person who knows the person you're profiling. Both people must be quoted in the story. The person you're profiling must be interviewed either in person or over the telephone; email and other interview methods are not allowed when interviewing the subject of the profile. The other interview may be conducted by any method. You cannot interview other students in COMM 101 for this assignment.

CONTACT INFORMATION: You must provide contact information for both people – email and phone number – after your end mark (30 or ###). You will not receive credit for the assignment until your instructor can verify that (1) interviews were conducted and (2) the subject of the profile was not known to you prior to the start of this assignment.

DUE DATE: The final draft of this story will be due in hard copy by the BEGINNING of class on Thursday, June 5. First drafts are required to be turned in on Thursday, May 22. Multiple drafts may be submitted to the instructor for review, but grading turnaround time may keep you from fully implementing any suggested changes after May 22.

SUBJECT APPROVAL: Formal approval of profile subjects by the instructor is not required.

LENGTH REQUIREMENTS: Try for a profile of about two pages, double spaced (a half-page on either side of this is acceptable). This is not much room; make sure you exercise concise writing. It may help you to think of the story as a brief vignette. Make each word count. Show, don't tell.

POINT VALUE: This assignment will be worth twice as much to your final grade as a normal writing assignment – so, 200 points.

A GUARANTEED PERFECT SCORE: If your feature is approved to run in a Citrus College student news outlet, such as the Clarion website or the Logos Magazine website, you will receive full credit on this assignment. If you're interested in pursuing this option, please let your instructor know ASAP. Keep in mind that stories written to run in the Clarion or Logos (1) must have at least three interviews, (2) must have a clear tie to Citrus College, (3) must be of high quality and (4) will be subject to editing by the student editors of the Clarion and Logos. Stories must be

published by the Clarion and Logos no later than Thursday, June 12, for this option to be implemented.

A few pointers and hints to keep in mind for personality profiles:

1. Initial contact: Make contact with your subject early. Explain your project to them. Explain how long you anticipate the interview taking (it may be best to have them set aside an hour, even if you don't anticipate the interview taking that long). Remind your subject you may need to follow up with them in case you have further questions. Let them know the story will only be shared with students in this class and the instructor (about 20 people total); however, if you are going to submit your story to run in the Clarion or Logos, be sure to let your sources know this instead. Explain the need to interview someone who knows them; they could help you with this. This person may be interviewed before or after you interview the person you're profiling. If it's possible to meet them in person, meet somewhere quiet but public. You can also watch the subject in their work environment and interview them there if that meets the theme you're pursuing.

2. During the interview: Everyone has a story to tell; often, it's a matter of asking the right questions or enough questions. The profile should not be a rehash of the 5Ws and H of the person's life. This is not a biography. Profiles should reveal attitudes, habits, mannerisms. Use your interview time to search for these.

3. After the interview: Read notes carefully after interview to determine focus. Ask yourself what the angle is, what the overarching theme is. Don't feel bad following up with your sources if you need more depth or some clarification. It's better to be annoying than to be factually incorrect or unclear.

4. Writing the story: Don't use a hard news lead. Use a soft news lead, such as an anecdotal lead. After the lead, write a "nut graf" that summarizes the reason for writing the story. Entertain and inform. Remember to develop a "kicker" ending. This is not an inverted pyramid; stories should not fall flat at the end.

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