

The Assignment

For this assignment, I would like you to choose a person, place, or event at Purdue and write a profile about it. Here are some possibilities for your profile:

- Someone at Purdue whose profile will illustrate a larger social or campus issue.
- An administrator, teacher, student, or staff member whom you believe people need to learn more about. You'll need to think about what this person's life has to offer to your audience.
- A place or event at Purdue that you think people need to know about, or that illustrates an important campus or social issue.

Your profile should follow the conventions of your chosen publication venue and be a minimum of 750 words.

Creating an Impression

A profile typically contains description and analysis about a particular subject. You create a profile by gathering information using observation, interviews, and library research. The most important work in writing a profile involves selecting and arranging information to create a unified, dominant impression. In the world at large, you read profiles on people, cities, concerts, and organizations. For this assignment, you will be focusing on one of these things as it exists at Purdue.

Selection of a subject is crucial. If you wanted to profile the Purdue football team, you have choices to make. Are you going to profile the team as a whole, identifying the strengths and weakness of the 2004 Purdue football players this past season, or would your focus be on Kyle Orton as the single player that led Purdue to a winning season? Overall, what is your purpose in profiling your subject? What are you trying to communicate to your audience and why should they care?

A profile, like any writing, requires a perspective. This does not mean an arbitrary choice of opinion, but rather a position with regard to the subject and audience. If you were going to profile the Starbucks in the PMU, how would you go about it? Would you view the Starbucks as a student resource? As a familiar sight for people not from Purdue's campus? As a successful business venture? As a soulless corporate monster devouring all local identity?

Profile Characteristics

A profile creates a picture through selective use of detail. Every anecdote, quote, and descriptive detail must contribute in a meaningful way toward your dominant impression of the

subject

A profile often uses present tense to create a sense of immediacy and intimacy for the readers. By helping them feel like they are a part of the people and events you are describing, you will create a more powerful relationship between the audience and your profile subject.

A more sophisticated profile often illuminates larger social issues and cultural patterns in more concrete and personal ways. While focusing on a particular subject, a writer can draw attention to the larger social implications of that subject's existence. Every story is embedded in a larger social context and is connected to the beliefs and experiences of others. Your purpose could be to draw a larger meaning out of a particular profile.

Research

Part of the research and interview process is choosing the information for your profile that will achieve the impression you want to make. If you have done a complete job researching the person, you will not use all the information you find. You must do first-hand research; it is not sufficient to refer to other's research only. Your primary research should consist of interviews and observations. You may also need to complete some archival research (library and internet) in order to better understand the context and facets of your topic. Even if you are profiling a place or event, you will need to conduct an interview of a person(s) who can give you perspectives that textual sources may not; interviews will help you to incorporate a personal perspective into your profile.

Publication Venue

Choosing someone to profile would be difficult if I were simply asking you to pick a person and show me that you can write a profile. However, I am providing you more direction. For this assignment, I want you to choose a publication venue and write the assignment in keeping with its guidelines. This venue needs to be appropriate for the person you are profiling, and the dominant impression you want to portray to your chosen. For example, if you were profiling your RA for your dorm newsletter, your profile would be different than a profile of him or her for the honors program magazine. The conventions and audience of your publication will guide what sort of impression you want to create and how you will create it. Attach a two-paragraph description—conventions, typical readers, etc.—of your publication venue to the final draft of your profile. Additionally, include a copy of the actual publication or the related URL with reference to the publication submission guidelines.

Evaluation is based on how well you fulfill the following criteria:

- Successfully complete first draft and peer-review participation
- Unmistakably create a dominant impression of the subject through the use of detail
- Effectively address the intended audience of your chosen publication
- Clearly organize, contributing to the construction of the dominant impression
- Efficiently incorporate first-hand research from an interview—and observations, if necessary (library sources, if used, must not dominate the paper)
- Thoroughly describe your publication venue
- Nimble utilize any needed citations
- Skillfully adhere to mechanical conventions

Due Dates

First Draft—Friday, February 11

Final Draft—Friday, February 18

With the final draft, please attach your earlier drafts, any comments from peer review sessions, and the description of your publication venue.