

ENGL 1113: Composition I
Essay #2: Profile
(15% of Final Grade)

Important Dates:

Peer Review – 10/1 – Bring TWO physical copies of your rough draft with you to class!

Student Conferences – 10/3 & 10/4 – A sign-up sheet for you to select your day/time will go around beforehand

Final Draft – 10/8 – Due via Dropbox on D2L by class time!

Formatting and Requirements:

Length: **4-6 pages, double-spaced**

MLA format: heading, page numbers, font, original title (see syllabus for more information)

Purpose:

To further develop the ability to select and organize important details in order to reveal an interesting topic, present a particular angle, and define a topic's significance through the profile genre. To practice and develop observation and interview skills as essential research methodology.

Key Terms and Definitions:

Angle: A unique approach to or perspective on a topic. In the case of profiles, this generally comes from firsthand experience with the subject and provides readers with an insight that may be new to them.

Interesting: New or surprising. Holds value for both the writer *and* the reader. When paired with an angle in a profile, it goes beyond simple description to capture "something essential about its subject . . ." (*Everyone's an Author*)

Prompt:

Your second essay will be a **profile** that uses detailed information to present an interesting angle on a firsthand account of a person, place, or event here in Stillwater. As we have discussed in class, "interesting" can be a nebulous and subjective term, but as you research, explore firsthand, and interview your subject, you will be able to develop a perspective on your topic that will shed new light on it for your readers. Additionally, we will be analyzing several examples of successful profiles for how their writers approached the task of developing an interesting angle.

Because it can seem like a daunting task to shape your profile to an unidentified reader—or even to one of your peers in the class or especially me the instructor—we will use a hypothetical scenario that will hopefully give you a clearer sense of your **rhetorical situation** and **audience**:

You have been hired to write a profile for a magazine that will go out to all incoming first-year students at OSU. Your editor has asked you to write a firsthand account of a person, place, or event that will show an incoming student a side of Stillwater they would not have discovered on their own. In addition to an interesting angle on your subject, your editor is requiring that you conduct an interview in order to gather important information and include direct quotes in your piece. This could be with the person you're profiling, someone with authority at the place or institution, or an attendee at the event. It will be up to you, through research and firsthand observation, to develop an interesting angle on your subject, but however you choose to approach your topic, your profile should be asking: how can I bring this person/place/event to life for a student new to Stillwater and persuade them of its significance?

A successful profile will:

- **Demonstrate firsthand experience with its subject (25% of grade):** Researching and reading about your subject is a good first step, but you'll also need to visit the people and places you'll be writing about. Does your profile show you've spent considerable time and return visits observing and taking notes on your subject? Does it show that you've talked to the people involved? Does it provide information you could have only gathered firsthand? Or does it read like a distant and vague impression of the subject?
- **Provide detailed information on the subject (25% of grade):** Your firsthand experience with the subject will also show by the types of details you provide, including: background information, vivid descriptions (again, invoking all five senses), anecdotes, and dialogue. Are you bringing your subject to life for your reader who has never visited this person, place, or event? Are you carefully choosing the most important information on your subject that will be of interest to your reader? Or are you just giving the reader a hazy sketch of your subject or a broad summary of its history?
- **Present an "interesting angle" on the subject (30% of grade):** Much of the information you choose to provide will be dictated by the angle you take on your subject. Are you moving beyond description to show the reader something essential about your subject? Are you showing how your expectations of your subject changed the more you observed it? Are you upending the reader's assumptions about your subject? Or are you merely providing a generic overview of your subject without your personal perspective?
- **Seamlessly integrate the required interview (20% of grade):** The interview will not only be vital for gathering important information about your subject, but it will also add color and a voice of authority to the profile. Is it clear a thorough interview has been conducted with the subject or someone associated with the subject? Is there a strategic blend of direct quotation and paraphrasing seamlessly woven into the profile? Are the chosen interview segments effective—do they capture the subject's voice and/or present authoritative information, or could they have come from anyone?