

Profile Essay and Newsletter

Objectives

- Write a profile essay (500–800 words) about a person or team/group assigned in class (we'll use class time for interviews and observation).
- Observe, during the course of the assignment, the place where the person or team/group works or carries out activities that serve as the focus of the profile.
- Give an impression of the person's, or group/team's, unique characteristics.
- Work in teams of four in class to create a profile newsletter, using good design strategy and reading audience awareness.

Assignment

The person(s) we will interview and persons/place we'll observe will be announced in class. In class we'll practice interview and observation techniques. Interview the person (or persons) and observe the place they work, play, or carry out the activities that make up the focus of the essay. For example, if we interview students in an art class, observe their activities and ask questions about what they have learned, what they are currently doing, and why they are interested in art. The interview and observation MUST be done by you during the timeframe of this assignment.

Steps for the assignment:

- Create appropriate interview questions.
- Attend class the day of the interview and observation.
- Take notes, including direct quotes from the person(s) and your observations.
- Take or obtain a photo of the person or team/group in action. A digital camera will be available during the interview and observation time.
- Present in writing what you have learned in a way that informs and engages readers.
- Arrange profile in a team newsletter.
- Option: send your profile subject a thank-you note and copy of the profile.
- Work in teams to develop a profile newsletter.
- Present profile newsletter to class and possibly the person or team/group who are the focus of the assignment.

Newsletter

After profile rough drafts are written and while final drafts are being revised, work in teams of four to compile a single newsletter incorporating the four profiles written by members of your team. Format it as a newsletter, using principles of effective visual design discussed and practiced in class. Microsoft Producer is helpful software for formatting the document, although Word and other programs work well. Each team's completed newsletter should contain these features:

- Newsletter title that fits the focus of the profiles
- Date
- Page numbers
- Pull-out passage or quote in each article
- Attention-catching title for each article
- Writer's byline for each article
- At least one photograph for each article, with a caption and credit to photographer

Organization

Create an introduction that grabs readers' attention.

- Create a thesis statement that states the impression you want to get across.
- Use topical order, chronological order, emphatic order, spatial order, or a combination appropriate to the content of your essay. The logic of the organizational pattern should guide readers through the content.
- Use transitions to show relationships between ideas and move readers from point to point.
- Provide a thought-provoking conclusion based on your interview and observation.

Visual Presentation

Each team will share its newsletter in class using the projector. Each team will have up to five minutes. Other students in class or I can ask for more information or ask questions if we're interested or the presentation seems too short or incomplete.

First, comment on the choices that you made in designing your newsletter. Decide who will comment on each item in the following questions:

1. Explain the choices you made in designing the document.
 - How did you decide on a newsletter title that fit all four essays? How is it effective for your reading audience?
 - Why did you select your design or color scheme? How is it effective in supporting the content of your profiles?
 - How effectively have you guided the readers' eyes to the starting focal point and led them through the document? How have you used hierarchies effectively?
 - How does the layout balance positive and negative space? What does this contribute to the effectiveness of your newsletter?
2. Next, individually, tell about your subject, the impression you wanted to convey, and how you met two of the outcomes on the grade rubric. Give specific examples.