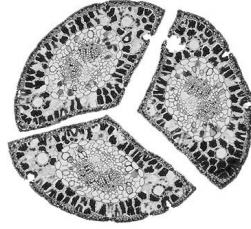


Paper # 2: Objective Writing

The Profile



pine leaf

Objectives: (1) to choose, on your own, a suitable subject for a profile essay; (2) to meet the objective as well as the expressive aims of the profile genre; (3) to closely observe your subject and then communicate those observations by using a combination of objective and subjective description, as well as any supplemental information you might consider necessary; (4) to continue to practice techniques for generating ideas (brainstorming, freewriting, mind-mapping); (5) to continue to practice revision, and in revising to consider the larger rhetorical situation: the ways in which the needs of the writer, the subject, and the audience can all be successfully accommodated in a piece of writing; (6) to practice careful editing and proofreading.

Directions: Choose a suitable subject for a profile essay and write a 4-5 page profile essay. You can choose to write about a person, a group of people, or a place. Further suggestions for topics are below.

Recalling the aims of the profile essay

The factual information and the objective description you provide have the effect of informing readers about your subject. This kind of content meets the objective aims of the profile. The impressions you communicate through subjective description—the words you choose to create a positive or negative impression about your subject—have the effect of making readers feel a certain way about your subject. This kind of content meets the expressive aims of the profile. As the writer you will decide how expressive and how objective you want your profile to be. You can choose to write a mostly objective or mostly expressive profile, or a profile that provides an equal mixture of the two. In the end, readers should come away from your paper knowing something about your subject and also about your impression, or your feeling, toward your subject.

Recall the way the readings we've discussed in class, as well as the readings in Chapter 7, have demonstrated the subtle way profile essays blend objective and expressive content. "The Five Bedroom, Six Figure Rootless Life" and "Soldiers of Christ: Inside America's most powerful megachurch" are both profile essays that blend information and impression in sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle ways.

Starting your profile essay

Read Trimbur's suggestions for choosing a topic for a profile essay in *The Call to Write* (pp. 249, #1-5). If you can't think of an interesting subject for your profile, this may get you started. To further help you get started, you can work on completing one or more of the "Invention" exercises: Finding a Subject (p. 250), Clarifying Your Purpose (p. 251), Developing a Statement of Purpose (p. 251), Deciding on the Dominant Impression (p. 252), Arranging Your Material (p. 253).

Some general ideas for writing profiles: people, places, events

- Go to a familiar place (the quad, a dorm lounge, the library, a favorite hangout) and closely observe the details of the physical space, the people, and the kinds of activities going on to write a profile of the place. Conduct one or more interviews to include the personalities of the people who visit this place, so that you can represent their attitudes about it in addition to your own.
- Write about a person you know who you feel represents someone "typical" (as the Links are a "typical" relo family, or New Life a typical "megachurch"). Some examples might be: the typical WCU student, the typical student-athlete, the typical RA. You can use your imagination and find someone you would be interested in observing and writing about.
- Write about a person who seems entirely unique to you and present this person in in a profile essay that emphasizes and highlights that uniqueness. Conduct an interview if you can.
- Closely observe someone from a different generation to discover some significant differences in perspective between you and this person. You can arrive at an understanding of these differences based on your own observations, or you can try to conduct an interview with one or more people from that particular generation.
- Write an informative profile of someone already well known (a great contemporary or historical figure, an artist, a celebrity, a political personality, a sports hero, etc.) but make an attempt to present this person to your readers in a light of your own impressions or unique perspective.
- Write an informative profile about WCU. Include information about the campus as well as your impressions of several aspects of campus life. You have the ability to provide an insider's view. Take your readers behind the curtain, beyond the confines of the typical promotional brochure.