Profile

Overview: We can learn about writing both by experimenting with genres and by studying the craft of real writers. The profile paper is an opportunity for you to learn from another writer while also exercising creativity in your own writing.

Goals: The main goals of this assignment are for you to learn:
- About the habits, processes, and strategies of skilled writers.
- To effectively incorporate observations, summaries, paraphrases, and quotes into your writing in ways that strengthen your piece while also respecting your sources.
- To creatively blend description, narration, dialogue, and commentary in order to craft a portrayal that is both interesting and fair.

Audience: Your primary audiences are yourself, the class, and me. We want to learn about what skilled writers do—from your content as well as from your approach to writing the profile.

Procedures and Requirements:

1. Use the broad definition of “skilled writer” that we developed in class to choose a subject to interview and write about in your profile. Contact this person to make arrangements, and interview him/her in time to bring your interview notes to class on Thursday, February 2.

2. Study examples and advice (both shared at class) to help you write effectively in this genre.

3. Write a profile of the skilled writer you interviewed. In about 1,000 words, present a vivid portrayal of your writer. Craft a focused piece that blends your dominant impression with telling details presented through description, narration, dialogue, and commentary. Use observations, summaries, paraphrases, and quotes to help us to have a sense of who this writer is, how s/he operates, and what makes him or her tick as a writer. Capture our attention even as you shape a fair and honest portrayal of your writer.

4. Bring electronic copies to class throughout your work on the project. Your final draft is due on Tuesday, February 14.

Workshop drafts: Meeting due dates for the workshop drafts is important for you and for your classmates who will be learning with you. Each time that you miss one of these deadlines or come unprepared for a workshop will result in a full-grade reduction from your score on the paper.

Grading: The profile is worth 15% of your final grade. As in all writing situations, you should consider genre, audience, purpose, and situation in order to make effective rhetorical choices:
- Present an interesting, fair portrayal of a skilled writer and his/her approach to composing.
- Blend your dominant impression with telling details (via description, narration, dialogue, and commentary).
- Use observations, summaries, paraphrases, and quotes effectively.
- Arrange ideas and craft language to develop a creative structure and style for your piece.
- Apply literary conventions for grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Demonstrate a developed and accurate understanding of course readings and activities.