***Profile Essay***

**What it is:** A profile written for a Composition course will provide your audience with a thorough description of a person, place, activity, or item.

**How to choose a topic:**

Select a topic that is specific rather than broad. A broad topic will be difficult to describe in a lot of detail.

Example of a broad topic: The toys I had as a child.

Example of a specific topic: The teddy bear I have had since I was three and once lost on a bus.

\* A topic that you are personally familiar with makes for a stronger profile than something you lack firsthand experience with. This is why, for the most part, celebrities do not make good profile topics. Unless, of course, you know that celebrity personally.

**How to create a thesis:**

Typically a profile is very limited in length, meaning you want to have a very specific idea in mind about which to focus your paper upon.

Example of broad thesis: My brother has helped me by being himself.

Example of a specific thesis: My brother is strong, unwavering, and patient.

\*From these qualities you can elaborate and explain what makes your brother who he is. Then you can move on to saying why this is so important. Why does it matter that he is all of these things? Providing short anecdotes to support each of these traits will make your paper strong and supported.

**How to proceed through the body paragraphs:**

The manner in which you complete the larger chunk of your paper depends upon the directions you have been given from your instructor. Follow the specific guidelines based on your assignments:

1. You are allowed to use personal pronouns (I, me, my, etc.) in your profile. If this is the case, as was stated above, make use of anecdotes to support the claims you are making about your subject. For example, including a short story about how your brother spent four hours helping a small boy learn to throw a baseball properly would act as support for how patient he is. Another helpful thing to consider is the use of dialogue, if you can recall portions of importance conversations that revolve around your focus, use it!
2. You are not allowed to use personal pronouns. This may be the case if you are writing about a celebrity or someone you don’t know personally. In this instance you will need to pull your supporting information from source material. Be sure to obtain all directions from your professor so you know what types of sources you can use. For example, if you choose Miley Cyrus, it may be good to know whether or not you can use gossip websites and/or tabloid magazines. With these materials, be sure you are following the appropriate citations rules as provided by your professor. If you struggle with citations (MLA, APA, Chicago) be sure to reference *The Little Brown Handbook* or the PurdueOWL.

**Additional Helpful Hints:**

* Be sure you are following the guidelines in place by your instructor. These include page length, citation instructions, and topic restrictions. You don’t want to lose points right off the bat for not following directions.
* Consider your paper’s focus; the first thing that pops into your mind may be what pops into all your classmates’ mind. You may, also, find that you have more to say about a unique subject than you do on your mother, father, brother, grandmother, etc.
* Don’t assume that a profile has to contain only positive information. Often students see examples about a strong brother and assume it needs to be a paper placing someone/thing on a pedestal. This is not the case. Consider writing about something scary, mean, bad, upsetting - you may find that your paper becomes stronger because you chose to think outside the box.