

Reporting Assignment Two – General Feature

Date assigned: Monday, Feb. 19

Revision help?: By appointment in my office (M-Th, noon-4) and Friday, March 2 in lab

Final draft due: Sunday, March 4 by 11:59 p.m.

Points possible: 100 (75 for words, 25 for photos)

The fine print:

1. Pick one subject for a written feature story. It can be anyone(s) or anything(s) you find interesting, but should have a tie to OSU or Stillwater. You should strive for this topic to be at least one degree removed from your intimate circle, IE, this shouldn't be a feature on an organization, situation, business or acquaintance you're involved with because of the conflict of interest that would present (it would be hard for you to be really unbiased in telling that story).
2. Take five photos of your topic. Consider "action" shots of your people or subject doing something related to the story. Variations could include close-ups of source's face (what we call a "mug") or "environmental portraits," which would be the subject, stationary, in an environment reflected in the story (the businessman in his office, the student at her desk, the rider atop her horse, etc.). Some "historical" photos of the topic that someone else shot is OK, too. Let the story determine what the best photos would be.
You will not be graded on the resolution or quality of the photos, but your ability to collect a variety of creative photographs. Cameras are available for checkout from the school. Smartphone photos are fine.
3. Give your audience a complete overview on the kind of person, people, thing or entity you're writing about. You need history, details that include dates, times, places (all the who-what-where-when of every anecdote — really give us a sense of time and place), as well as colorful details that make your story pop to life (strong, description nouns and verbs, showing of incidents rather than "telling" of incidents). Often, using the same trick that you did for your personality profile — finding a fascinating anecdote or theme — can work well in a feature. Use it to weave a tale that speaks to a broader human experience. As in a good personality profile, a good feature writer will center on one experience (a retelling of interesting events) but be mindful of a bigger theme and play to it. So your stories are interesting pieces about other people, places, things and events, but they often speak to a bigger, identifiable theme.
4. Strive (always!) for an excellent lead and nut graph.
5. Use colorful details. Show, don't tell. (NOT, "They served snacks," but "Waitresses in

red cocktail dresses delivered peanuts and popcorn.”)

Requirements:

- ❑ Text: 600-800 words, though a little shorter or a little longer is OK, depending on the story (no less than 500). Typically length rules are flexible, depending on the story. You must use at least three sources, that is, interview at least three people.
- ❑ As with the profile, photos should be pasted after the story with cutlines.
- ❑ Source list: A list with the names, phone numbers and titles of all the people you interviewed. No emails. You will be counted off if you don't list working phone numbers.

Turning it in:

- ❑ There are two ways you can turn this story in.
 - ❑ Turn in a completed Word or Google document to barbara.allen@okstate.edu.
 - ❑ Create an account with Medium or Atavist and make an online presentation where you do your own layout (see story list for examples.), then email the link to barbara.allen@okstate.edu.
- ❑ Use at least 12-point type, double-spaced if you use traditional turn-in methods.
- ❑ Your full name and a headline should appear at the top of your work. A headline isn't a title — it's a subject/verb/object phrase that tells you exactly what the story is about. (Man bites dog; Woman sues city; City refuses sewer contract; student overcomes cancer, etc.) You don't need a date or class title or anything. But don't forget your name and the headline.
- ❑ Embed your photos with cutlines into your Word or Google doc, or your site. They need photo captions: tell your readers what's going on in each photo and tell who shot them or where you got them.
- ❑ At the end of your story, be sure to include your source list with phone numbers. If you choose an online presentation, do NOT include them in your presentation. Instead, email them to me in the body of an email or as an attachment.

Story examples

[Last Day at the Waffle House](#)

[Living Night by Night](#)

[Celebrating Savannah](#)

[From a cardboard box to loving arms](#)

[Titans' Delanie Walker collects records on, off field](#)

[Facing Alzheimer's, mother gets tattoo of her son so she'll never forget](#)