

# Considerations When Revising the Profile

I don't tend to offer a ton of personal feedback on the profiles, because almost everyone has the same issues. What I often provide is this list, in order of concern, of the crucial things to check for as you revise; my students tend to find this really helpful. If you can honestly check off these items, the draft should be well attended to!

- ☐ Be sure you've conducted an interview and have actual quotations recorded in the draft.
- ☐ Be sure your "essay" isn't just a several-page, giant paragraph.
- ☐ If you *have* paragraphs, hopefully you're not merely sharing all the questions you asked along with the answers your interviewee gave, in the order in which they occurred during your interview.
- ☐ If you've got paragraphs, look closely at what you did for the opening one—be sure it gives us readers context, i.e. enough key details about the person you're interviewing, so we know who the person basically is and what you're focusing on with them.
- ☐ You want the subjects of the paragraphs to be clear, yes, but also ordered interestingly. Rule of thumb: help us *care* about your interviewee first. Then we might care about why they do what they do, or how they got started. So look at your first body paragraph—hopefully it's not just providing a bunch of facts about your interviewee.
- ☐ You want to be in control of the focus. Some easy tells: look at how often you refer to *yourself* or *your* reactions to things. See whether or not the focus in the start and finish is inadvertently on you and what *you* wanted from the interview, or what *you* think about the interviewee. Be sure you're aware of your role. Pro tip: leave yourself completely out of the essay. It will be easier to write.
- ☐ Be sure you've omitted any direct mention of what you asked the interviewee. Readers don't care what your questions were.
- ☐ Examine quotations more closely. Be sure they are necessary.
- ☐ Examine quotations again. Hopefully you have more than facts. Hopefully you have stories, too, and quotes that otherwise go beyond surface-level observations . . .
- ☐ Examine quotations even more closely! Hopefully you've considered whether you needed all those quotes in their entirety, or whether you were better off summarizing some of the details yourself for variety's sake.
- ☐ Given all the quotations, hopefully the punctuation is correct. Hopefully the interviewee's speech is punctuated so that the actual sentences are visible and not awkward or confusing for readers.
- ☐ If you are able, include relevant observable details, whether about the setting in which you conducted the interview, or the physical appearance or gestures of your person.
- ☐ Consider the extent to which you've communicated a *personality*. Be sure a few traits come across through your interviewee's speech and stories, and through your observations (and not because you announced them with no subtlety).
- ☐ You want transitions to be clear and varied. Easy tells: notice whether or not you lamely lead into quotes (ex: When asked about cars, David replies . . .), or how well you move from the end of one sentence/paragraph to the beginning of the next. We covered this in class; get the draft to show it.
- ☐ Be sure the closer is satisfying to readers—that it's not about *you*, that it lets the interviewee speak meaningfully, that it helps leave a lasting impression of the interviewee.
- ☐ Be sure to proofread the draft for errors. Read each sentence in reverse order if it helps.
- ☐ Be sure not to forget the Work Cited page, or to title the piece in a way that's interesting and helpful for readers. I showed you how to do this in Week 8.