

Writing the Biographical Profile

Instructions for how to write your profile of a fellow famous person

It's always a story

The word **BIOGRAPHY** comes to us from the Ancient Greek words ***Bios*** (Life) and ***Graphy*** (Record). It is a text that tells a story about someone's life. Your job as Journalist/Biographer is to tell your reader a story about your chosen subject.

To tell a story properly, there are a few things you should keep in mind:

- Good stories have a structure
- Good stories are easy to follow
- Good stories are engaging
- Good stories leave us with an impression

Start with structure

While some stories depart from the typical structure from time to time, stories usually follow a pattern, or Narrative Arc, which includes the following elements:

- Exposition
- Inciting Incident
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Denouement

In class, we often refer to this as the “Story Roller-Coaster”. If you want a refresher on this, I encourage you to watch my [two videos](#) on it.

Getting organized

There are as many different ways to organize your BIOGRAPHY as there are to tell a story. The important thing is that you choose a method that works for you and your subject, and be consistent.

- Chronologically
- Through a dialogue
- As a “Fairy-tale/Rags-to-Riches” story
- As an Action/Suspense story

However you choose to organize your text, remember that *if you confuse your reader, you lose your reader.*

An interesting turn of events

Writing an engaging BIOGRAPHY is about picking and choosing the events and details that will capture your reader's attention. This will help the reader to relate to the subject, and to picture significant moments in their head.

- Be specific
- Use sensory details
- Choose significant “story” moments

Leave a lasting impression

We tell stories for a lot of reasons; we use them to entertain, to inform, to teach, and sometimes to influence others. Your BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE should leave your reader with an impression. That impression might be a lesson to be learned, a reflection on their accomplishments, or a question about what comes next. Choose what works best for your subject.