PROFILE STORY GUIDELINES

Write a profile that could be published in a newspaper section that we are creating called Real People. This magazine focuses on the lives of people who are not rich and famous, but interesting in their ordinariness, in their connection with our own lives. Your job is to make the audience interested in the lives of these people.

Requirements
The story should be 50-75 lines (two to three pages), though I will not penalize stories that are slightly longer if you need more space. No story should be more than four pages (100 lines) of typed and double-spaced copy.

The story should present a picture of the person who is the focus of your project. The keys will be the use of material you have gotten from your observations and conversations. Highlight the descriptive elements, including sights, sounds, smells -- whatever is appropriate. Remember that the key is to show me, not tell me. Be concrete and descriptive.

At the same time, your description must develop the theme of the story. This is not a life history. The point is not to tell everything about this person; be choosy about what you put in and leave out. Do not empty your notebook onto the page. Be selective and pick the information and details that all lead us to a theme in your story. The story must focus on some element of his or her life. Your writing will draw us to that theme not by telling us, but by showing us.

You can use other material about this person gathered from secondary interviews with family or friends. However, you are not to use any documentary information or expert interviews.

I will also want to hear the voice of the profile subject prominently in the story. I can be flexible on this, especially if this person is non-verbal. But I would expect to hear this person's own voice and perspective coming through.

I think this story will be the most fun of any you do in this class. Make it a great one!