

Essay 2: A Portrait of a Person

Write a one- to two-page (250-600 words / 3-4 paragraphs) essay in classic style that presents a person in his or her typical context.

You should write about someone you know well, a close friend or a family member. Gather information about them, both through firsthand knowledge and interviews, and present that information in a compelling way. Interview others who know, or knew, the person and include their insights and observations in your portrait.

Make your subject interesting to your reader by finding an interesting angle from which to present the subject, by including engaging details, anecdotes, or dialogue to enliven the portrait, and by presenting his or her special characteristics or qualities as revealed in interviews and through your own observation.

Writing a profile about someone close to you can prove especially challenging. The emotions you feel toward your mother or your best friend do not automatically make them interesting to anyone else. Creating a successful portrait requires vivid and specific details, humorous (or dramatic) anecdotes, and a bit of emotional distance.

Give your essay a thesis and a clear, logical organization. Your first paragraph should start with a strong lead, provide any necessary background information, and end with a clear thesis statement. Then, in a paragraph or two, describe the person. Make your description clear, vivid, and concise. In your final paragraph, summarize the unique qualities of the person your essay has revealed. Each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence.

Use the essays we read in this section (“Under the Influence,” the excerpt from *An American Childhood*, “My Father: Leslie Stephen,” “Yeager,” “George Washington,” and “Abraham Lincoln”) as models for how to write an engaging and compelling character portrait.

Write your essay in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging.

Make every word count.

Due: February 24

(Bring THREE copies of your essay to class for Peer Critiques.)