



DIGITAL PROFILES: A UNIT OF STUDY

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Initial Interview Questions
- 2 Online Resources for Print and Digital Profiles
- B Example: Family Letter
- C Possible Profile “Noticings”
- D Expert Definitions of Profiles
- E Characteristics of Good Interview Questions
- F Reflections on *The New York Times* Series One in 8 Million
- G Sample: 2011 City Stories Interview Questions
- H Photo Vocabulary
- I Technical Resources and Rubrics

Attachment A1 Background & Examples: Print and Digital Profiles

Before you embark on this unit, it is a good idea for you to understand the nature of both journalistic profiles and their digital counterparts. The following links have been gathered as a starting point for this research.

Print Journalistic Profiles

[Cub Reporters](#) is an excellent, very kid-friendly place to start both for you as a teacher and your students. In particular, there is a step-by-step page of instructions for writing profile stories. Unfortunately, their examples of profile stories are not as user-friendly and *must* be screened before using them.

[Matt Blake](#) provides a nice, concise outline of the elements of a journalistic profile.

[Suite 101](#) has a good article on how to write a profile.

[Chris Jones's blog](#) has lots of good advice for writing profiles.

For your red herring, consider using a [Wikipedia](#) article of a person of interest to your students. These articles are very different from journalistic profiles and provide a good basis for comparison.

Sound/Slide Digital Profiles

This [interview](#) with the producers of *One in 8 Million* provides an excellent starting point for understanding what they were trying to accomplish and the journey they took as they produced these digital profiles.

[Another interview](#) with the producers adds to this understanding of digital profiles. [Soundportraits](#): An archive of Sound Portrait radio documentaries. Sound Portraits Productions was the predecessor to the national oral-history project, [StoryCorps](#).

Doing Your Own Digital Profile

As educators, we understand that going through a process—particularly a new process—can be one of the most important resources we have. Therefore, we **strongly** urge you to go through this process yourself before setting out to do it with your students. This way you will understand all of the steps necessary to accomplish your goals, the pitfalls along the way and the thinking necessary to produce a digital profile. In the end, you also will have your own personal profile to share with your students, a means of modeling the process as your students begin their own projects.

Find a cohort of like-minded professionals in your building and take this journey together, sharing your ideas, your challenges and especially, your triumphs with each other. And most importantly, *have fun!*

Attachment A2 Online Resources for Print & Digital Profiles

Online resources for print profiles

Chris Jones does great profiles for *Esquire* magazine. Again, please screen for appropriate content for your students. Here are a few examples of his profiles.

[Jewelry Artist](#)

[Wheel of Fortune: One Letter Winner](#)

[Price is Right Contestant](#)

[Newt Gingrich](#)

Esquire also runs a series called [What I Learned...](#) These pieces are a bit of a hybrid between traditional journalistic profiles and digital profiles as we present them here. The format for these pieces is to simply present the direct quotes of the subject without any attending commentary or introduction from the journalist. You might want to view these for your own information and as always, pre-read any of the pieces before sharing them with your students.

In addition, there are several examples available on the [Hearst Journalism Awards Program](#) website. Click on a year, then click on a winner. Look for the box in the upper right hand corner and click on *Personality/Profile* stories.

While most of Y-Press stories are news features, some feature individual profiles.

[Lois Lowry 7-13-2010](#): author talks about her latest book and what sets it apart
[Fund A Field](#): two brothers who raise money to build soccer fields in Africa
[Immigration in France](#)

Outreach, a local agency that works with homeless youth, allowed Y-Press to share individual's stories.

[Lifeline for homeless woman](#)

[Job but no home](#)

[One check away from homelessness](#)

[Working hard to graduate](#)

[We Care Act](#)

Online resources for digital profiles

IMPORTANT! Every child, every classroom is different. All of these resources should be previewed by the teacher prior to use with students in order to assure they are appropriate for your unique situation.

[City Stories](#): These stories were produced in conjunction with [Y-Press](#). These stories, produced by 9-10 year olds with the guidance of teenaged-counselors, feature stories about people and businesses in various neighborhoods around Indianapolis.



[One in 8 Million](#): Similar to the local City Stories, these profiles are a collection of stories about various people in New York City. Not all of these are appropriate for children, so screen carefully. This was a one-year project for *New York Times* photographers. Note the black-and-white photos.

[Mountain Workshops](#): Produced in a weeklong workshop, Mountain Workshops draw a team of dedicated teachers and determined learners to a small Kentucky town. They work together to learn about the community and the possibilities and challenges of visual storytelling. This October, the city of Somerset will host the 36th workshop. For class examples, review both *View the Stories* and *Archives*, then scroll down to videos. Some of the videos are strictly slide/sound profiles and some incorporate video, but all are listed under video section of the website. These are rich, lovely examples of digital profiles.

Attachment B Example: Family Letter

Date

Dear Room __ Family,

Your child is about to begin an exciting new writing unit called Digital Profiles. A profile is a genre of writing that features a person that is fascinating to the author for a particular reason. It might be a person they admire, someone who has accomplished something important or just a person whose life is interesting in some way. The profile captures one special aspect of that person and showcases it.

While the students have participated in several writing studies over the year, this unit is different in that it has the added component of extending their writing into a digital product in addition to creating a written profile. Students will select a subject for their profile, interview that person at least two times, photograph the person in their particular environment, record the interview and finally, combine the audio and the photographs to produce a sound/slide profile.

Because of the special nature of these projects, we are hoping each child can get extra support at home as we progress through this unit. This support will include helping your child choose a person that they would like to interview for their profile, helping your child arrange for and conduct at least two face-to-face interviews with the person of their choice, and helping your child meet various deadlines in order for the profile to be completed.

Throughout this unit of study, you will be given more specific information about your role in this exciting project. I believe you will be amazed at the engagement your child will bring to this project and the growth they will exhibit as a writer and a thinker.

As always, let me know if you have any questions or comments and thank you in advance for your support as we progress through this unit.

Sincerely,

Teacher's Name

Attachment C Possible Profile “Noticings”

- About a person, but doesn't include everything like a biography
- Short
- Focused/intensive
- Biographical in nature, but with just one angle or focus
- Contain anecdotes that illustrate important themes in the person's life – driven by anecdotes, not fact driven
- Intention is a genuine fascination with the person, place or subject
- Anecdotes and information are related directly to the subject
- One source is usually sufficient
- Profiles have a hook or lead to hold the reader until the end
- Anecdotes are substantiated by elements in the profile such as sounds and images
- Three aspects digital profiles – voice of subject, images and sounds that work together to tell the “story” within the profile

“In a sense, it is the subject writing the article. The journalist is merely transcribing the story.”

In Digital Profiles, this is done *not* with the journalist's words, but by using the voice of the subject along with captured images and sounds.

Attachment D **Expert Definitions of Profiles**

Source: New York Times interview with One in 8 Million series producer, Sarah Kramer and Deputy Photo Editor, Meaghan Loram.

<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/29/one-in-8-million-wins-an-emma/>

ML: It's people telling their story to you in their own words...in a way that was elegant and presents the people in a dignified manner.

SK: ...to marry beautiful visuals with beautiful sound.

ML: ...wanting to keep it as simple as possible while letting people have the most intimate experience of hearing people talk about themselves [without] a lot of distractions.

SK: If you have three minutes, you can only hit, probably at most, three notes, not even three topics...it's like three building blocks. You can introduce one point, which layers on another point, which layers on another point. As soon as you try to give a whole biography or autobiography, of somebody in three minutes, then you're failing.

SK: ...it should be nuanced and it should be surprising and it should have tension. It should have elements that make a good story...you're a photographer, you're a father, you're a husband, you're a son, all these different things. We can't hit on all of your thoughts and emotions. You don't want a lot of just passing phrases on a lot of different topics.

Source: *Cub Reporter*

<http://journalism-education.cubreporters.org/2010/08/how-to-write-profile-story.html>

A profile story is a portrait of a person in words. Like the best-painted portraits, the best profiles capture the character, spirit and style of their subjects. They delve beneath the surface to look at what motivates people, what excites them, what makes them interesting. Good profiles get into the heart of the person and find out what makes them tick.

The problem is that lives are hard to fit into newspaper articles, no matter how much space is allotted for them. Reporters who simply try to cram into a profile all the facts they can come up with inevitably end up with something more like a narrative version of a resume than a journalism story.

Like all other stories, profiles must have an angle, a primary theme. That theme should be introduced in the lead, it should be explored and often it will be returned to at the end of the story. Something of a person's character, spirit and style will then be revealed through that theme.

Whatever the theme, it takes a thorough understanding of a person's life to create a revealing sketch of that life. Reporters should spend time with their subjects while they're doing whatever makes them newsworthy. For example, if you're writing about a ballerina, try to observe her performing on stage or at least practicing in her dance studio.

Good profiles - and all good journalism stories - show, instead of telling. Use all five senses when you interview someone. What are they wearing? Do they fiddle nervously with their pencil? Is there a chocolate smudge on their shirt? Is their hair stylishly spiked?

Because a profile cannot be complete without quotes - there is no way to write a profile without extensive interviewing. Frequently, more than one interview is necessary unless the writer already knows his subject well. Good profiles also contain quotes from people who know the subject of your story well. Spice your story with the words of family, friends, enemies and the subjects themselves.

Finally, good profiles strike the appropriate tone. Think about your profile - is it someone who is involved in a serious issue, like eating disorders? You probably want to be more serious in your tone. Is it someone playful - a comic book artist, perhaps? You can be more playful. But remember - your personal opinion is not appropriate. You are there to merely paint a picture of this person - to let the facts speak for themselves.

Attachment E Characteristics of Good Interview Questions

Possible responses

- Open-ended. A question that can't just be answered with a yes/no or just a few words.
- Brings about or leads to other questions
- Makes the interviewee stop and think – thought provoking
- Elicits interesting and relevant information from the interviewee
- Asks about his or her past
- Asks about his or her plans/hopes/dreams of the future -- reflective
- Requires upper-level thinking
- Short and easy for interviewee to understand
- Hypothetical – “What if...” questions
- “Man from Mars question – Pretend you just landed on Earth. Ask the person to explain something to you as if you had no knowledge of it

Possible resources

[Y-Press question sheet](#): For over 20 years, Y-Press has been training young people to think about different types of questions. Y-Press's handout and question samples.

[Open, neutral and lean](#): ESPN's question man, John Sawatsky shares insights on open-ended questions with Y-Press journalists.

Attachment F Reflections on the New York Times series “One in 8 Million”

“One in 8 Million” was an oral history project in which a different individual among New York City’s 8 million residents was profiled each week of 2009. As Jodi Rudoren, deputy Metro editor, put it in a memo: “The criteria for profile subjects are simple: Interesting person. Great talker. Never before mentioned in the NYT.”

After the series ended, the NYT staff that contributed to the yearlong project answered readers’ questions. Here we offer a few reflections from NYT editors Sarah Kramer and Alexis Mainland in which they talk about what they were looking for and the process involved.

You can read the Q & A in its entirety at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/03/business/media/03askthetimes.html?pagewanted=all#latest>

“The pieces in this series will be reflective, amusing, informative or surprising. They will not be about accomplishments or facts but instead about a person’s passions, dreams, struggles and the stories that make up a life. The collection will capture the spirit of the city and its residents, spanning age, borough, race, religion and economic class. We are looking for people who are thoughtful and open, who have a unique perspective, who one wants to listen to and listen to some more.

... There are still many neighborhoods and stories unturned, and we are constantly working to make sure the profiles, will, in total, create a portrait of this city (one of many possible portraits), while each story is complete on its own.

... One of the great pleasures of this project has been the passion of its audience. One of my favorite letters put it this way: “Thank you for this wonderful collection. I thought I would look at one or two of them, but soon found myself going through each and every one. They are a reminder of beauty in ordinariness, they teach us how all kinds of lives — old and young, learned and unlearned, strange and mundane — have an intrinsic value and deserve to be honored. They also urged me to look beyond the surface of people’s lives and find hidden there an individuality and an authenticity that is quietly heroic. In this world of hyper-achievement and celebrity status, these vignettes help to validate what is real.”

... So we’re asking all sorts of questions and listening carefully. Sometimes we begin a conversation thinking that if the person works out, for example, it’s going to be a piece about becoming an American citizen, but 10 minutes into it, it’s clear that [his fear of heights](#) is the main story. Sometimes we head into an initial conversation imagining all the possibilities for a piece and then the subject is really only able to answer questions with a “yes” or “no.” We’re looking for what makes the subject tick, something ineffable, a spark. When you’re writing an article, you can fill in all sorts of important details around a subject’s quotes as well as tease out scenes. When you’re working with audio, you’re relying on the speaker to do all that work — to lead you through the story. And usually people we talk to are willing to be interviewed but sometimes at first they’re not. In those cases, the pre-interview is also a way of allowing the potential subjects get to know us, too, and make sure this is something they’re interested in doing.”

Attachment G Sample: 2011 City Stories Interview Questions

Team introductions: Ask the interviewee to record his/her full name and job title.

[Leo, the barber](#), 2011 City Stories



1. Please tell us a little bit about yourself?
2. Please describe a typical workday for you?
3. How long have you been cutting hair?
4. How long have you owned your shop? Follow-up: How have you seen the community change over the years, specifically in relation to your shop?
5. What does your business offer or bring to the community?
6. How much of your business comes from regular customers?
7. Do you often get new customers? How do you advertise in the community?
8. How do you deal with unhappy/grumpy customers?
9. Have you done any crazy haircuts or had any weird requests? If so, can you please describe them?
10. How did you get started in the business?
11. Is/Has anyone else in your family been a barber or worked in your shop?
12. Do you have kids? If so, do you hope that your kids follow in your footsteps and why?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Team introductions: Ask the interviewee to record his/her full name and job title.

[Brian Shapiro](#), 2011 City Stories



1. Tell us a little bit about yourself.
2. Did you always have an interest in food and cooking?
3. What would you be doing if you didn't own Shapiro's?
4. Who do you plan to give the business to when you retire?
5. What do you do on a typical day?
6. Could you tell us a little about the history of Shapiro's?
7. How long has Shapiro's been in business?
8. Who came up with the recipes?
9. How do you trust your chefs to know the family recipes and not tell people about it?
10. How often do you change the menu (tradition)? How are recipes updated or new recipes introduced?
11. Do customers order more desserts or actual meals?
12. What time of day is the busiest?
13. What do customers like about Shapiro's?
14. What makes Shapiro's special or unique?
15. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

ACTION SHOT	Photograph of someone or something in movement
ANGLES	<p><u>Eye-Level</u> - This is the most common view, being the real-world angle that we are all used to. It shows subjects as we would expect to see them in real life. It is a fairly neutral shot.</p> <p><u>Ground level shot</u> - Taking a photograph at ground level.</p> <p><u>Low Angle or Worm's Eye View (WEV)</u> - Very low camera angle shot looking up from ground level. This shows the subject from below.</p> <p><u>Shot from overhead or high level</u> - High angle shows the subject from above, i.e. the camera is angled down towards the subject.</p> <p><u>Bird's Eye view (BEV)</u> - Very high camera angle shot downwards towards the subject from a building, ladder or balcony.</p>
CLOSE-UP SHOTS	<p>(This shot is used to show emotion; an expression; detail, or a reaction.)</p> <p><u>ECU (Extreme Close Up)</u> - The ECU gets right in and shows extreme detail.</p> <p><u>CU (Close Up)</u> - A certain feature or part of the subject takes up the whole frame.</p>
FULL-LENGTH PORTRAIT	Head to toe shot of a person (generally taken as a vertical shot)
GRAYSCALE	A photo made up of varying tones of black and white. Grayscale is synonymous with black and white. <i>(Teach students to convert colored photos to grayscale. Some cameras have this feature. If not, model conversion on the computer.)</i>
HANDS WORKING	A special close-up shot focused on the person's hands
HEAD AND SHOULDER	<u>MCU (Medium Close Up)</u> - Shows the subject with head and shoulders in the frame.
HORIZONTAL SHOT	Or landscape - Holding the camera in its normal horizontal orientation to capture the image.
MID SHOT	<u>MS (Mid Shot)</u> - Shows some part of the subject in more detail while still giving an impression of the whole subject.
PERSPECTIVE	Through the experience of vision, you are aware of the size of many common objects, such as people, trees, cars, buildings, and animals; for example, you are aware that most adults are about 5 to 6 feet tall; therefore, when two people are shown in a picture and one appears twice as tall as the other, you cannot assume that one is in reality taller than the other. Instead you assume the taller person is closer and the shorter person farther away from the camera viewpoint. In this same manner, you make a size relationship evaluation of all familiar objects. Thus you can make a distance determination from this size relationship evaluation. The farther away an object is from the viewpoint, the smaller it appears; therefore, when subjects of familiar size are included in a photograph, they help to establish the scale of the picture (fig. 5-22). Scale helps the viewer determine or visualize the actual size or relative size of the objects in the picture. See http://photoinf.com/General/NAVY/Perspective.htm for examples. Refer to the dwindling size perspective and the vanishing point perspective.
SILHOUETTE	A dark image outlined against a lighter background
TILT-SHIFT PHOTOGRAPHY OR FOCUS AND SHIFT	Refer to website: http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/11/16/beautiful-examples-of-tilt-shift-photography/

TILTED OR SLANTED PHOTO	Also known as a Dutch tilt , this is where the camera is purposely tilted to one side so the horizon is on an angle. This creates an interesting and dramatic effect.
TWO SHOT	A medium shot, featuring two people
VERTICAL SHOT	Holding the camera at a 90-degree turn to capture the image
WIDE SHOTS	<p>EWS (extreme wide shot) - The view is so far from the subject that he isn't even visible. Often used as an establishing shot.</p> <p>VWS (Very Wide Shot) - The subject is visible (barely), but the emphasis is still on placing him in his environment.</p> <p>WS (Wide Shot) - The subject takes up the full frame, or at least as much as comfortably possible. Also known as: long shot, full shot.</p>
WINDOW REFLECTION	Picture of subject reflected in a window
ZOOMING	<p>Zooming in: using the zoom lens to zero in on an object or person</p> <p>Zooming out: using the zoom lens to zoom out from an object or person to show surroundings of the subject.</p>

NOTE: The PHOTO bingo card highlights most of the vocabulary words listed. Photos can contain more than one aspect. If the PHOTO bingo activity does not meet your needs, you can select a few from the list for the students to practice.

Vocabulary websites / sources

- <http://www.mediacollege.com/video/shots/> (gives photo examples along with definitions)
- <http://www.mediaknowall.com/camangles.html> (also has photo examples)
- <http://www.photographytips.com/page.cfm/1587> and http://store.kodak.com/store/ekconsus/en_US/html/pbPage.GlossaryContent/ThemeID.16765600 (great dictionary of photography terms from A to Z)
- <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/05/17/captivating-examples-of-silhouette-photography/> (site with great silhouette photography or Google images for more examples)
- <http://www.digitalcamerawarehouse.com.au/webcontent100.htm>
- http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/learningtechnologies/files/links/Shot_Definitions.pdf

Attachment I Technical Resource List for Digital Profiles

There are several ways to produce your Digital Profiles. Since there are so many different configurations in various schools and classrooms, it would be impossible to cover all of the possibilities. Consider this page a starting point for the technical aspects of producing a Digital Profile and work with your media specialists to adapt it to your own situation.

Equipment: Bare Bones

These digital profiles can be produced entirely on an Apple laptop using iMovie, iPhoto and GarageBand in addition to cameras for the photos. Audio can be recorded directly into GarageBand using the laptop's microphone or a USB microphone attached to the laptop. While this may compromise your audio quality, it is a doable setup.

On a PC, there is a free download called *PhotoStory 3* that is easy to use. The downside is that it would be more difficult to deal with audio. You would need to record and edit the audio using a program such as *Audacity* and save it before adding it to the PhotoStory.

Equipment: Purchased Products

It would be helpful to purchase a desktop USB microphone if you are going to record directly to a laptop. This will allow more flexibility when interviewing your profile subjects.

There also are several options for digital recording devices. Consult with your IT department or Media Specialist to see what type of system would work for you at your school.

Different software programs also can be purchased. [Soundslides](#) is one simple program to use. Another inexpensive option for PCs is [PhotoStage](#).

Rubrics

The best rubrics you can use are those created with your students following the immersion section of your genre study. This will provide you with a formative assessment as the students come up with criteria for assessing their Digital Profiles.

There also are many rubric samples that can be found on the internet such as [this rubric from RubiStar](#). Here is another specific to [journalistic profiles](#) that could be adapted for use with a Digital Profile. Also, this [high school site](#) offers several different ways to assess a journalistic profile. See also Digital Profile Study Rubric on next page.

Sample: Digital Profile Study Rubric

Student's name: _____ # _____

Person interviewed: _____

Topic/focus: _____

Interview

- In the writer's notebook there is evidence of interview try-its
- In the notebook there is evidence of preliminary interviews and notes
- In the notebook there is evidence of follow-up interviews
- Follow-up interview was recorded and completed on time

Above **At** **Below**

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Style and voice

- Piece has a focus/theme
- Selected audio fits the focus/theme. It is clear that the student gleaned answers from the interviewee that fit the final product.
- Piece contains a variety of photos (minimum of 8 types of shots)

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Organization

- Piece contains an interesting hook to engage reader
- Piece has a logical sequence
- Piece stays on focus/theme

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Genre study: digital profile

- Final product meets the definition of a digital profile

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Genre study: written profile

- Final product meets the definition of a written profile (draft only required)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Revision

- Evidence of revision of written profile.

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Editing: draft of written profile

- Evidence of editing in written profile

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Comments: