Profiles

In each of the essays in this section, students carved out distinctive approaches to the assignment—approaches that permitted them to explore exceptional elements in the culture surrounding them. As you read these essays, note how the students not only open a window to their subjects—people, places, trends—but they also attempt to demonstrate how their insight is meaningful.

You will soon find that this assignment challenges you to synthesize multiple texts and viewpoints: your analytic response to your interviewee's work, the interview itself, and, when appropriate, your own experience and responses. In addition, you must account for and write to an audience that may not have knowledge of your essay's subject matter. Just as these students do, you need to present your unique "insider's perspective" on your subject.

Your instructor will offer guidance in terms of the kinds of topics you can choose. Some instructors select a theme, such as the environment, media, local culture, and ask students to interview people who work in this area, while others ask them to simply use this assignment to become better acquainted with an aspect of someone's life, a well-loved place (or a hated or unfamiliar one), or social trends. For many instructors, conducting an effective interview is essential for this sequence because your interviewee's vantage point needs to be fully depicted, so you will need to devise provocative questions to allow your subject to give fully developed responses. But remember, this paper is still ultimately created and shaped by you; your profile subject should speak *with* you as a writer, not *for* you.

This picture could be seen as both a portrait of a space and the person within the space. Considering the details in this picture, what would you expect the owner of these items to be like? How might this person interact within this particular space? It might be a place for work, a place for rest, a place to surf the Internet. If you were in this space, how would this environment make you feel?