

Create a Leadership Profile

Find out how to write your own profile about one of the leaders featured on the site. Explore the leader's early life, career, successes, and challenges.

Assignment: Write a Three-Page Biography of one of the Leaders on the Black Leaders Website

To create a finished product you will need to complete six steps:

1. Select the leader you want to profile
2. Begin basic research
3. Look for patterns in the research and create an outline
4. Use the outline as a structure to write the biography
5. Proofread and edit
6. Find a venue to share

Step #1: Select the Leader You Want to Profile

First you will need to select a Black leader you find interesting. Click here for the Black leaders Biography Page.

Step #2: Begin Basic Research

Once you have selected the leader you want to profile, read through the extended biography that can be found by clicking on that person's name. Note the important information that you will want to include in your biography of the leader. Use the information provided on the site, and search the Internet to collect other information about your leader.

Useful information might be:

- Year and place they were born
- Information about their parents and/or family
- Information about their early life (home, school, and/or other early influences)
- Information about higher education (undergraduate, graduate, law school, and/or military service)
- Information about their early career (influences on early career and/or challenges in early career)
- Information about their career overall (challenges, successes, and/or changes)
- Other important events (marriage, children, awards, published books)
- Significance of achievements (how did or how does this person's achievements contribute to society)

Step #3: Look for Patterns in the Research and Create an Outline

An outline is a logical visual map of what you will be writing so that you produce a clear well organized paper. Look at your notes and try to find a pattern or pieces of information that clearly go together. Group related material together and create topic headings for each group. Look for the most important things within each group and use them as sub-headings.

Simple Sample Outline:

(Your outline will have very different events depending on which leader you select, and the example won't necessarily include the topics you'll choose.)

- I. Early Life
 - A. Born
 - 1. Date and Place of Birth
 - 2. Parents and Family
 - 3. Place of Birth
 - B. Education
 - 1. Elementary School
 - a. Influential Teachers
 - b. Impact of Segregation
 - 2. Secondary School
 - a. Influential Teachers
 - b. Impact of Integration
- II Higher Education
 - A. Undergraduate Experiences
 - B. Graduate Experiences
 - C. Military Service
- III. Career
 - A. Early Career
 - 1. Influences on Early Career
 - a. Role Models
 - b. Military Service
 - 2. Challenges in Early Career
 - B. Career
 - 1. Challenges
 - 2. Changes in Career
 - a. Law Career
 - b. Teaching Career
 - 3. Retirement
- IV. Family
 - A. Marriage
 - B. Children
- IV. Impact of Achievements
 - A. Awards
 - 1. Honors
 - 2. Appointment to Important Committee
 - B. How Achievements Help Society

Step #4: Use the Outline as a Structure to Write the Biography

Now that all of your information is organized into your outline, you can begin writing your rough draft. Begin with an opening paragraph with a thesis statement so the reader will know what and who the biography is about. Write the body of the paper using the outline as a guide. End your paper with a concluding paragraph that reiterates the thesis statement. Make sure to cite your sources.

Step #5: Proofread and Edit the Biography

Read over the rough draft of your biography and look for areas that can be improved structurally. It is not too late to move information around, remove material, and add more details. Look for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors and correct them. After making these changes ask someone to read it over for you. If no one is available, read it to yourself quietly, pausing where there is punctuation to see if the text flows smoothly. Think about including a picture of the leader you profiled in your final draft.

Step #6: Find a Venue to Share the Biography

Now that you have finished, it is time to share what you have learned with others. There are many ways to share your profile on a Black leader, so be creative. Create a bulletin board in your school about Black leaders and include the biographies. Create a book for the library or a website that features the biographies. Read them aloud in class or in an assembly.