

## Sample Paper: Profiling a person (Brimmer)

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Brimmer 1

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### Working the Water

Chesapeake Bay watermen have always been known as hardworking individualists, and Robin Collier lives up to this reputation. Robin has lived on Deale Island all his life. Like most watermen, he learned his trade from his father, who learned from his father. Working the water is hard and dangerous work, but when I interviewed Robin recently, he swore that there is no better way of life.

At the age of eight Robin began working the water with his father. Although he began working as a carpenter when he turned eighteen, after two years he was back. "I didn't like having a boss," explained Robin. "When you work the water, you are your own man."

A typical day for Robin during the crabbing season starts at 2:00 A.M. After powering up the Chrysler engine of his twenty-seven-foot Baycraft, he heads for Fox Island to buy alewives and menhaden, used for bait. By 3:00 he is checking his six hundred crab pots. He pulls up the pots, sunk in eight to twenty-five feet of water, rebaits each of them and sorts the crabs into three different groups: males, females, and crabs about to molt. Robin sells the crabs that are about to molt for five dollars a bushel to a friend. Why does he sell them so cheaply? "There's too much work involved with soft-shelled

Title is centered.

Thesis presents Brimmer's main point.

The paper is based on an interview.

Specific details illustrate the main point.

crabs," said Robin. "You have to check the boxes every two hours, and I am out on the water up to ten hours a day."

The crabbing season begins April 1, on the last day of the oyster season. Maryland watermen can't enter the market until June because the crabs haven't yet moved into their pots, but the Virginians on the other side of the bay start dredging for crabs from the opening day on. After saying a few choice words about the Virginia watermen, Robin explained that watermen dredging for crabs take all the crabs off the bottom, large and small. "Some Virginians keep 'em all," he told me, "even the ones under four inches." The practice of dredging keeps many of the young crabs from even reaching Maryland waters and is just one of the many reasons there is so much hostility felt toward the Virginia watermen.

When I asked Robin what he dislikes about working besides the Virginians, he replied, "These days if people can't find jobs they work the water, and right now the market is flooded. The price for bait is up, and the price of a bushel is down. With so many people on the water you have some jokers fishing your pots and sometimes stealing them." Even worse than the people, according to Robin, are the jellyfish. When the water warms up, the jellyfish move up the bay, and they make crabbing miserable. When the jellyfish are bad, Robin's arms are covered with red welts up to his shoulders, and sometimes the poison gets into his eyes and he can hardly see.

It's hard to make a living from crabbing, said Robin, because "anything can go wrong." Robin is kept from his pots if his boat

Spoken words  
bring Robin  
to life.

Brimmer prepares  
readers for Robin's  
spoken words.

### Brimmer 3

breaks down, and some storms can keep him from going out. “You can crab in the rain but not in the wind,” explained Robin. “And when the wind whips up the waves, I also lose pots. The current will roll the pots and pull the floats right down under.”

To supplement his income from crabbing, Robin must work in the off-season. Occasionally he tongs for oysters (pronounced “arsters” on the shore) at the mouth of the Moniac Bay and Menoken Creek, but mainly he works as a custom cabinet-maker. He also carves decoys and has been known to act as a guide for a hunting party every now and then.

Although working the water is a hard life, Robin plans to stay with it. “I like being my own boss,” he said. “I know that if I don’t work hard, I’m not hurting anyone but myself.” And, he confessed, a life on the water does have its appeal: “You see things on the bay that you can’t see anywhere else. I probably see more sunrises in a month than most people see in a lifetime.”

Brimmer ends by echoing his main idea.