WELCOME TO YBK

NEW ADVISER

QUICK START

VARSITY YEARBOOK

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VARSITY YEARBOOK

WHERE TO START

We know you've got this!

You do not have to figure everything out at once.

This guide turns the New Adviser email series into a practical, step-by-step roadmap for planning, teaching, selling, designing and completing your yearbook with support from Varsity Yearbook resources and your rep.

If you're unfamiliar with the email series, go to: ybk.link/preference-center

WELCOME TO YEARBOOK

BOOKMARK **YBK.LINK/NEW-ADVISERS** FOR NEW ADVISER HUB

Yearbook advising may feel like a big responsibility at first, but it can also become one of the most rewarding roles in your school.

You get a front-row seat to students learning, leading, creating and telling the story of their year. If you don't realize it now, your role includes:

- Helping students grow as leaders, storytellers, photographers, designers and teammates
- Building meaningful relationships with students through creative, purposeful work
- Celebrating everyday moments, traditions, activities and achievements across your school
- Giving students a real audience for their work and a finished product they can be proud of
- Creating a lasting record of the school year for students, families and the community

Your support team at Varsity Yearbook is here to help you learn the best practices, build confidence and feel supported every step of the way.

DISCLAIMER: We know not everyone signs up to be a yearbook adviser — sometimes the role finds you. This guide keeps the process straightforward with key content collected in one place so you can take it one step at a time. And who knows? You just might fall in love with it.

STAY SUPPORTED

As a new yearbook adviser, one of the best things you can do right now is get familiar with the support already in place for you. Varsity provides tools, guidance and a real person you can rely on all year.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Schedule a rep check-in:** Use your Varsity Yearbook rep as your first stop for questions, deadlines and guidance.
- ☐ **Bookmark key resources:** Save the links below where you can find them quickly.
- ☐ **Explore eDesign:** Log in and click through the dashboard, menus and help options.
- ☐ **Review your kit:** Look through the printed tools so you know what is already available.
- ☐ **Join the BAND community:** Ask questions, gather ideas and see how other advisers solve common problems.

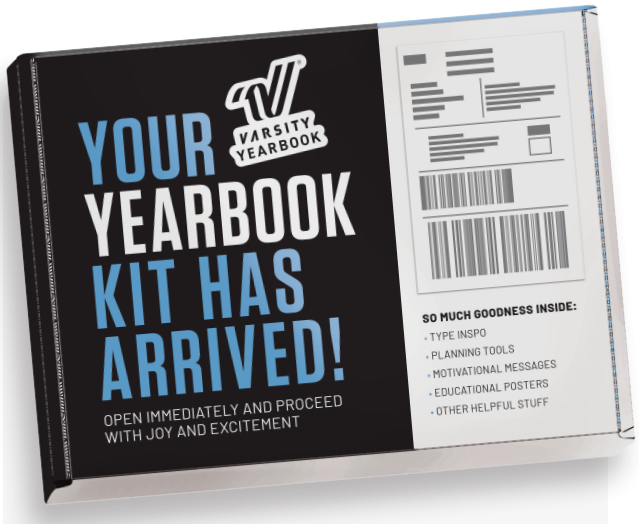
WHAT TO BOOKMARK:

1. YearbookDiscoveries.com
2. **New Adviser Hub:** ybk.link/new-adviser
3. **eDesign:** myvarsityyearbook.com
4. **eDesign Help:** yearbook.help
5. **See page 13 for more helpful links.**

MEETING WITH YOUR REP

Create an agenda for efficient meetings

BEFORE EACH MEETING, make a quick agenda with questions, deadlines, sales updates, ladder concerns and student needs. You'll get clearer guidance and leave with action items you can complete.



YOUR VARSITY YEARBOOK KIT

Your kit is a great place to start when you are getting your yearbook program organized. Inside, you will find tools to help you plan plan your yearbook and keep the essentials in mind all year.

Use the ladders, calendars, stickers, color posters, font poster, overview sheet and eDesign Quick Start booklet to map out your book, choose your look and track important deadlines.

You will also find helpful teaching and support pieces, like the photography poster, goal posters, sales resource guide and more.

Think of the kit as your built-in starting point. Pull pieces out as you need them, use what works for your staff and keep coming back to it throughout the year.

MORE RESOURCES READY FOR YOU

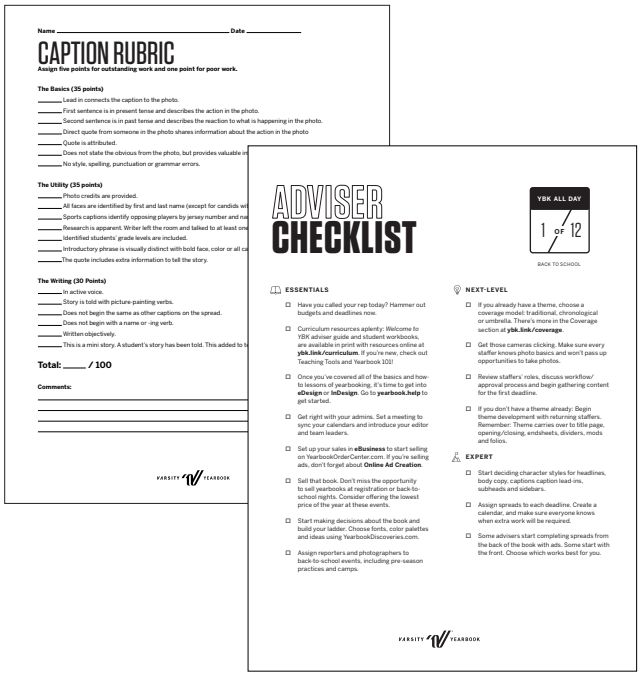
Need more for your classroom? Visit ybk.link/kit-extras to order additional resources, from sales posters to more in-depth guides, at no additional charge.

SET CLASS STRUCTURE

You do not need a complicated system to run a strong yearbook class. A clear, consistent structure helps students know what is expected, understand how their work will be reviewed and stay on track as pages move from assignment to completion.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Choose a tracking system:** Use a shared spreadsheet or checklist to track assignments.
- ☐ **Use a simple rubric:** Set clear expectations for deadlines, completion, effort, quality and revisions.
- ☐ **Walk through an example:** Show students what a completed assignment or spread should include.
- ☐ **Keep checklists visible:** Help students know what to do next without always asking you.
- ☐ **Check progress regularly:** Use the same review process each week so expectations become routine.



SCAN FOR MORE

CHECKLISTS AND RUBRICS: Use the provided tools at ybk.link/checklists as-is or as a starting point. Start simple, stay consistent and adjust as you learn what works best for your staff.

GRADING YEARBOOK

Yearbook grading works best when students know the expectations.

COMPLETION-BASED

Start each assignment at 100 points and deduct for missing or late work.

100 points = complete and on time

-10 points = each day late

-10 points = missing content

-10 points = names or facts not checked

-10 points = revisions not completed

RUBRIC-BASED

Use a simple rubric when you want to grade quality. Score categories such as:

- Deadline met
- Required content included
- Photo, caption and design quality
- Accuracy of names and facts
- Revisions completed

EXTRA TIPS

- Grade checkpoints, not just final pages. Give credit for steps like photos, captions, copy, spread layouts and revisions.
- Make deadlines part of the grade. Students should understand that late work affects the full staff and, potentially, yearbook delivery.
- Use peer review before adviser review. Have students check names, captions, photos and missing content first.
- Consider grading revisions for completion. Grade final spreads and stories for quality.

START YOUR SALES

One of the best things you can do early is start selling your book. Early sales build momentum, create awareness and make the rest of the year easier to manage.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Confirm your sales setup:** Check with your rep to make sure online and in-school sales are ready.
- ☐ **Gather sales details:** Know the price, deadline, ordering link or payment options, depending on how you're selling.
- ☐ **Start with one announcement:** Write a short message families and students can understand quickly.
- ☐ **Plan simple reminders:** Share posts, announcements or emails throughout the year.
- ☐ **Ask students to help:** Let students promote the book through posters, announcements or word of mouth.
- ☐ **Track sales numbers:** Review progress with your rep and adjust reminders as needed.

WHAT IS A NAME LIST?

A name list is a roster you import into eDesign. It helps you tag students and faculty in photos, track coverage, build captions, create the index and support sales tools like Send and Sell or Sales Assist.

A name list can help you:

- Tag and search students by name
- Catch misspelled names
- Track who has been covered and who is missing
- Add names to captions, photos and the index
- Send sales messages to families, if parent emails are included

How to upload: Ask your front office for a student list with first name, last name, grade and parent email addresses. Request a separate faculty/staff list. Student ID numbers and homeroom teachers are also helpful. Save the file as Excel or CSV, then watch "Importing the Name List" in eDesign Help before uploading.

- Go to the Name List tab in eDesign
- Select the Import/Export menu and choose Import List
- Click Select File and find the file you want to upload (Excel or CSV)
- Indicate whether the list is a student or faculty list
- Map your spreadsheet columns to the correct fields in eDesign
- Confirm selections and click Import Data

UNDERSTAND THE FINANCIAL SIDE

Yearbook is a budget-based project, so it helps to understand the numbers early. Ask your rep to walk you through book price, sales goals, deadlines, ad sales, extra costs and how many books you need to sell to stay on track.

Simple habits can help:

- **Review sales numbers regularly**
- **Keep track of payment deadlines and price changes**
- **Know what expenses may affect your budget**
- **Ask your rep before making big changes to page count, quantity or pricing**
- **Use reminders to promote sales before each deadline**

You do not need to figure out the financial side alone. Your rep can help you understand where you stand and what steps to take next.

TROUBLESHOOTING: If your front office questions your need for the student list, provide them with our FERPA policy or PIPEDA/FIPPA policy if you're in Canada. These explain how Varsity Yearbook follows laws related to using student information. Find them at ybk.link/book-sales.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

A clear calendar turns a big project into manageable steps. When you can see your year laid out, it is easier to lead your staff, stay on track and follow a plan that works all year long.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Start with production deadlines:** Add official submission dates to your calendar first.
- ☐ **Add school events:** Include sports, dances, testing, breaks and activities that need coverage.
- ☐ **Choose one calendar system:** Use a format your staff can access and understand in print or digitally.
- ☐ **Assign coverage early**: Schedule photographers before events happen.
- ☐ **Set internal deadlines:** Give yourself time to revise and polish before plant deadlines.
- ☐ **Review with your rep:** Make sure your timeline is realistic and supports your production schedule.
- ☐ **Check it weekly:** Review the calendar with your staff and adjust as needed.

DEADLINE MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Making everything due on the same day: One big deadline can overwhelm your staff and make it harder to check quality.
- Skipping buffer time: Build in time for proofreading, approvals, revisions and unexpected fixes.
- Forgetting about breaks and big events: Check the school calendar before setting deadlines, so you are not asking students to finish major work during a busy week.
- Treating every deadline as final: Use early incremental deadlines to help students revise, improve pages and stay ahead.

EXAMPLE: WALL CALENDAR

PLAN DEADLINES BACKWARD

Start with your final plant deadline, then work backward to set staff deadlines, review dates and buffer time. Your ready-to-submit deadline should be at least two to three weeks before the plant deadline, so you have time for proofreading and unexpected fixes.

Example timeline:

- Plant deadline: Monday, March 16
- Submission deadline: Monday, March 2
- Final proofing week: Feb. 23 - March 2
- Section deadlines: Feb. 9, Feb. 16, Feb. 23
- Initial page deadlines: Jan. 12 - Jan. 26

Use rolling section deadlines: Instead of one big deadline, stagger deadlines by staff teams, spread content or grade level. This approach:

- Prevents everyone from working on everything at once
- Spreads your staff's workload evenly
- Allows time to spot issues early and fix them
- Builds consistency through delivery

BUILD YOUR LADDER

Your ladder is the blueprint of your yearbook. Planning it early helps ensure every group, student, club and team has a place in your book while also making room for portraits, clubs, ads and major events.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

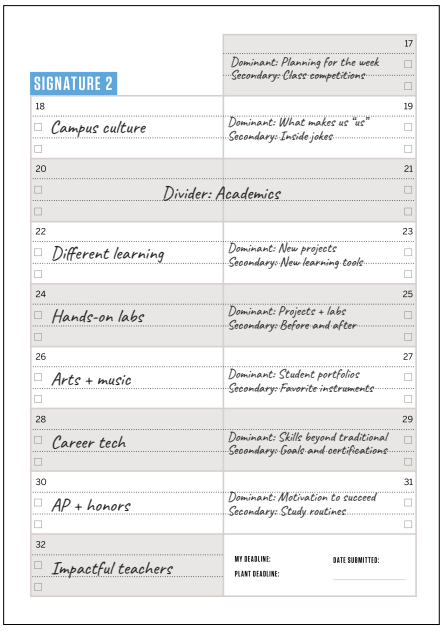
- ☐ **Use last year as a guide:** Start with the previous book or ladder, but update it to align with this school year.
- ☐ **Choose main sections:** Decide what larger sections your book will include and determine the organization, such as traditional (student life, sports, etc.), chronological (monthly, seasonal, etc.) or umbrella (theme-supporting organization).
- ☐ **List coverage needs:** Add events, teams, clubs, organizations and groups within each section.
- ☐ **Estimate page counts:** Give each section a rough number of pages based on coverage.
- ☐ **Match pages to deadlines:** Make sure your ladder works with your production schedule.
- ☐ **Check for gaps:** Look for missing groups, crowded sections or pages that may need to move.
- ☐ **Talk to your rep:** Ask before changing page count, quantity or major ladder plans.

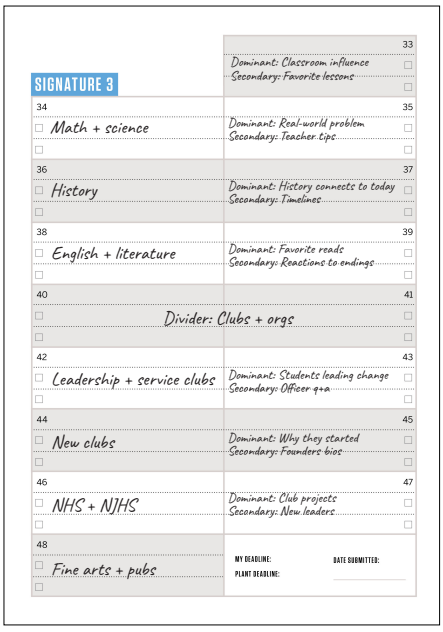
WORRIED ABOUT PORTRAIT DAY?

A little planning goes a long way. Use these steps to stay organized.

- **Plan early:** Work with your admin and photographer to confirm picture day, makeup day and yearbook deadlines.
- **Check names:** Have students, teachers or volunteers help verify name spelling so portrait files match your yearbook name list.
- **Use the day wisely:** While students are waiting, gather quotes, promote yearbook sales with QR codes and remind how to share photos if needed.

EXAMPLE: DESK LADDER





ORGANIZE YOUR STAFF

A student-led publication gives students ownership, builds real-world skills and helps your yearbook program run more smoothly. Clear roles give students direction and help everyone contribute.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Name leadership roles:** Choose editors, section leaders or team leads.
- ☐ **Explain ownership:** Make sure each leader knows what they are responsible for.
- ☐ **Assign production jobs**: Give students roles such as photographer, writer, designer or copy editor.
- ☐ **Match roles to strengths:** Use student interests and skills to guide assignments.
- ☐ **Create a workflow:** Decide how work will be assigned, reviewed, revised and approved.
- ☐ **Give every task an owner:** Students should know who is responsible for each part of the book.
- ☐ **Revisit roles:** Adjust responsibilities as students grow and the book's needs change.

EXAMPLE: PRODUCTION TEAMS

TEAM 1	TEAM 2	TEAM 3	BUSINESS TEAM
Team Leader Writer 1 Writer 2 Designer Photographer	Team Leader Writer 1 Writer 2 Designer Photographer	Team Leader Writer 1 Writer 2 Designer Photographer	Assigned to ongoing projects: Sales Social media Promotion events Coverage reports

YOUR ROLE: As the adviser, guide the process, teach expectations and support student leaders. Students should own the content and book creation while you coach and ensure the book is accurate and print-ready.

STAFF ROLE IDEAS

Use staff roles to give each student a clear job and show how their work supports the full book.

Start simple, especially with a small staff. One student can take on more than one role, as long as every major task has a clear owner and students know what to do next.

- **Editor-in-chief:** Leads the staff, tracks deadlines and works closely with the adviser.
- **Section editors:** Manage assigned sections and check coverage.
- **Designers:** Build layouts and keep pages consistent with the theme.
- **Writers:** Write headlines packages, captions and stories.
- **Photographers:** Cover events and upload strong, varied photos.
- **Reporters:** Interview students and gather quotes.
- **Copy editors:** Check spelling, names, facts and captions.
- **Photo editors:** Organize photos and help choose the strongest images for use in book.
- **Sales or marketing team:** Promotes yearbook sales and deadlines.
- **Index or coverage manager:** Tracks who appears in the book.
- **Ad manager:** Tracks ads, deadlines and missing materials.

DEFINE YOUR LOOK

A yearbook theme is a simple idea that ties your book together and keeps every page feeling connected. It should guide your photos, writing and overall book design.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Brainstorm theme ideas:** Start with simple ideas that can support the full book.
- ☐ **Choose a clear direction:** Pick a theme that can guide your photos, writing and design.
- ☐ **Learn design basics**: Review spacing, hierarchy, fonts, color and consistency.
- ☐ **Select style elements:** Choose fonts and colors.
- ☐ **Plan the cover:** Know your cover and its deadline.
- ☐ **Use the theme often:** Let it guide headlines, captions, coverage and page design.
- ☐ **Take note of decisions:** Keep style choices in one place so the staff stays consistent.

START A THEME

Find an idea that fits your school year, then add a simple phrase, a few colors and spin-off headlines.

Example: All In

- Concept: Teamwork and belonging
- Visual: Bold fonts, school colors, circles and arrows
- Headline spin-offs: "All Together," "All the Action," "All Year Long"

Example: The Best Part

- Concept: Favorite moments, people and traditions
- Visual: Bright colors and photo strips
- Headline spin-offs: "Best Days," "Best Teams," "Best Moments"

Example: Right Here, Right Now

- Concept: Capturing the year as it happened
- Visual: Time stamps, map pins and calendars
- Headline spin-offs: "Here for It," "Happening Now," "In This Moment"

EXAMPLE: FONT COMBOS

SERIF + SANS SERIF
Abril Display
LATO REGULAR

SCRIPT + SANS SERIF
Yellowtail
Unitus Condensed

THIN + BOLD
Chantilly LH
ALUMNI SANS

HANDWRITTEN + PLAYFUL
Caveat Regular
BAHIANA

SIMPLE + DECORATIVE
AVALON MEDIUM
BEAT

SANS SERIF + HANDWRITTEN
ANTIQUE OLIVE
Zeyada Regular

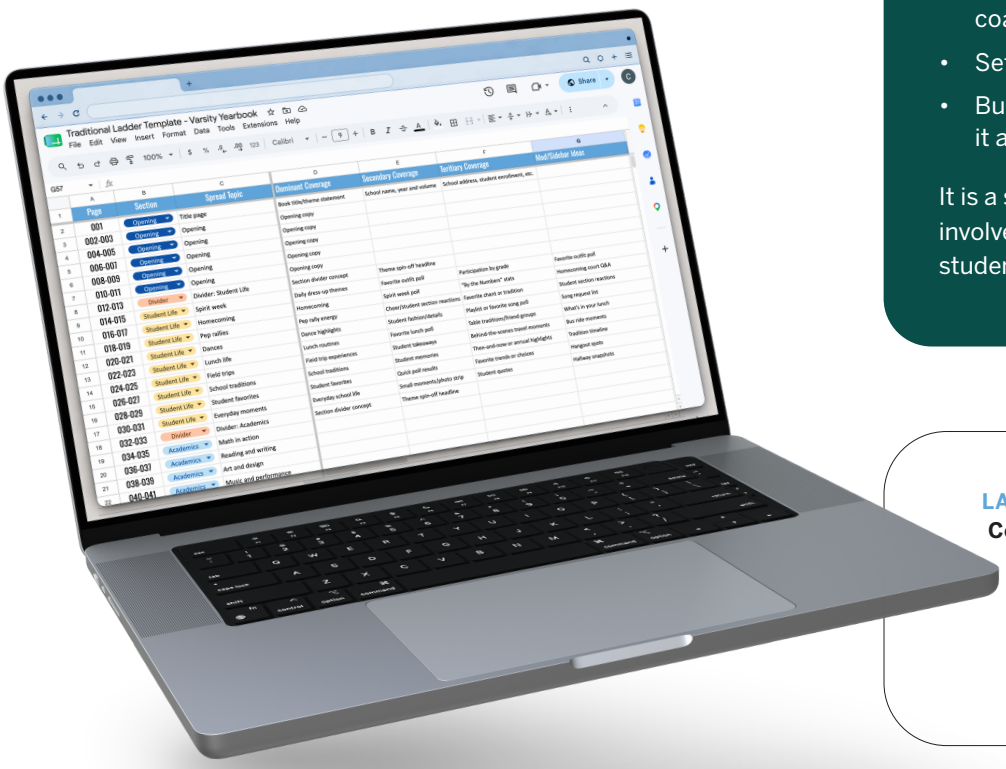
SANS SERIF + SERIF
ENCODE SANS
Ferrara Regular

PLAN YOUR COVERAGE

Great yearbooks come from consistent, intentional coverage. Teachers, coaches, parents and students can all help gather photos and stories along the way.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Map coverage areas:** Connect your coverage plan to your ladder and calendar.
- ☐ **Assign coverage:** Give students assignments, such as sports, clubs, academics and events.
- ☐ **Schedule photographers:** Assign students well before events happen.
- ☐ **Clarify expectations:** Tell students what kinds of photos, quotes and details they should get.
- ☐ **Use community photos:** Collect submissions through eShare when helpful.
- ☐ **Review coverage often:** Check that no group, grade level or activity is overlooked.
- ☐ **Track who appears:** Use the Coverage Report to help keep the book balanced.



CROWDSOURCE COVERAGE

Make it easy for your school community to contribute photos to the yearbook at YearbookShare.com.

As the adviser, you control what gets used. Set deadlines, add guidelines, review submissions and move approved eShare photos or portraits directly into your eDesign Library.

Find the promo tools at **ybk.link/eshare-promo** to share flyers, posts and announcements, so your community know how to submit photos and what you need.

eShare can help you:

- Collect more photos from events, classrooms, clubs and everyday moments
- Include students your staff may not see during the day
- Gather photos from teachers, coaches, parents and students
- Set clear guidelines for what to submit
- Build stronger coverage without doing it all yourself

It is a simple way to boost coverage, involve your community and help more students see themselves in the book.

LADDER TRACKER: Use the Traditional Coverage ladder template at ybk.link/traditional-ladder-template to plan spreads and track coverage in one place. Update it weekly so your staff can see topics, deadlines, proofing status and what needs attention.

LEARN DESIGN & eDESIGN

Logging in and exploring eDesign helps you and your staff begin building pages and spreads, turning ideas into something real.

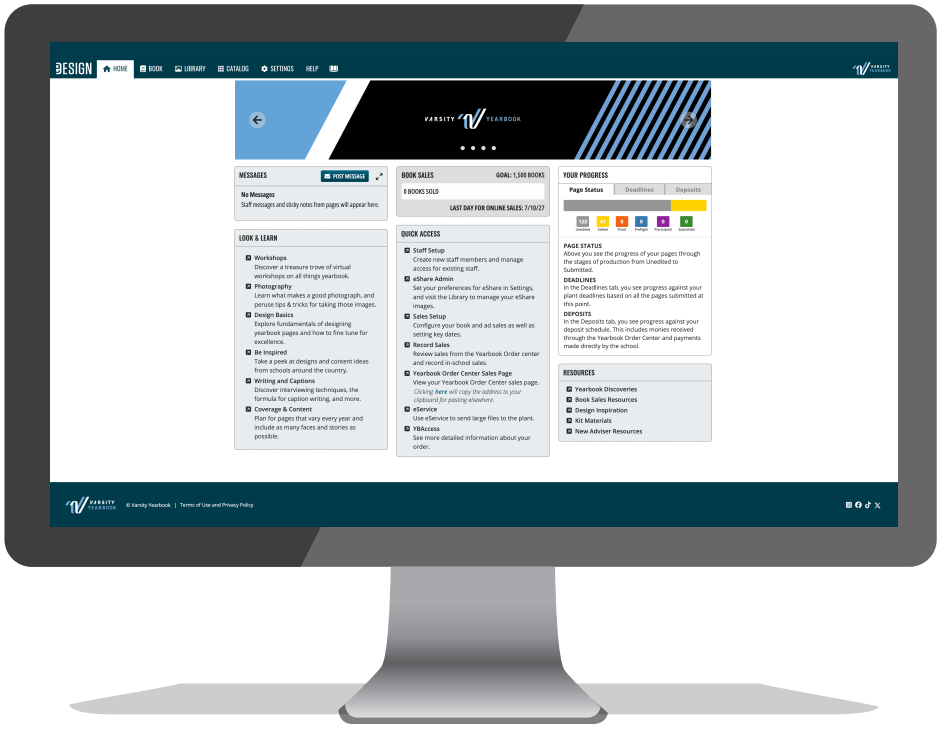
TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Log into eDesign:** Explore the dashboard and basic tools.
- ☐ **Use eDesign Help:** Let built-in lessons and support guide your first steps.
- ☐ **Browse templates:** Look through the Catalog, templates and Square One resources.
- ☐ **Try the basics:** Practice adding photos, captions, text and design elements.
- ☐ **Save useful pieces:** Keep templates or mods that can be reused.
- ☐ **Let students practice:** Give students time to learn before building final spreads.

KNOW YOUR eDESIGN SUPPORT

You can find eDesign tutorials and guides to support each step of learning and using eDesign at yearbook.help.

- **eDesign Curriculum:** Lessons designed to give students a strong understanding of eDesign and familiarize them with many of eDesign's features.
- **Video Tutorials Library:** Provides access to all the video tutorials that cover eDesign's features.
- **PDF Guides:** Available for staff setup, next-level design and strategies for successful deadlines.



ELEMENTS OF A SPREAD

When a yearbook is open, the two facing pages create a spread. Learning these parts makes it easier to guide your staff and review pages.

1. **Swiss grid:** A non-printing grid of equal squares that gives your spread structure.
2. **Gutter:** The center fold where two pages meet and bound.
3. **Internal margin:** The spacing between photos, copy and other content packages on a spread.
4. **External margin:** The white space around the outside edge of a spread, including space for the folio.
5. **Package/mod:** A group of related elements, such as a headline, copy, photos and captions.
6. **Eyeline:** An invisible horizontal line that helps guide the reader's eye across the spread.
7. **Folio:** The page number, section or topic placed in the margin.
8. **Dominant photo:** The largest, strongest photo on the spread.
9. **Copy:** The main story or body text on the spread.
10. **Headline:** The title of the spread topic and usually the largest text on the page.
11. **Candid photo:** An unposed photo that captures a real moment.
12. **Bleed photo:** A photo or graphic that extends past the page edge.
13. **Caption:** Text that identifies the who, what, where, when, why and how of a photo.
14. **White space:** Empty space that helps organize the design and guide the reader.
15. **Bleed area:** The extra space beyond the trim edge used when photos, color or graphics run off the page. Never place copy in the bleed area.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

Square One makes yearbook design easier to teach by giving students a repeatable, modular system. Instead of guessing where photos, captions and stories go, students use a grid, consistent spacing and mods to build clean spreads.

Students learn how to:

- Use a grid
- Create visual hierarchy
- Group photos and copy into mods
- Use spacing, alignment and white space
- Guide the reader through a spread

WHY IT WORKS

- **Easy to teach:** Students start with the strongest photo or story, then build around it.
- **Better coverage:** Mods make room for more photos, quotes and student voices.
- **Cleaner pages:** The grid keeps spacing and alignment consistent.
- **Faster production:** Students spend less time guessing and more time building.
- **Real skills:** Students practice grids, hierarchy, spacing and organization.

SQUARE ONE GUIDE: **Read the guide at ybk.link/square-one-guide to teach design before students build in eDesign or InDesign.**

Try hands-on Design Bites, so students can learn the step-by-step spread building process.

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

You have built your plan, organized your team and started bringing your yearbook to life. Now it is time to keep that momentum going as your book begins coming together.

TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH

- ☐ **Confirm assignments:** Make sure pages and responsibilities are clearly assigned.
- ☐ **Collect content consistently:** Keep photos, stories, interviews and captions coming in.
- ☐ **Hold progress checks:** Review what is done, what is late and what needs help.
- ☐ **Review pages carefully:** Check completion, accuracy, names and balanced coverage.
- ☐ **Ask your rep for help:** Reach out when questions or concerns come up.
- ☐ **Keep promoting sales:** Continue reminding students and families to order.

WORKBOOK AND ADVISER GUIDE: Use the *Welcome to YBK* student workbook and adviser guide together as a flexible way to teach yearbook basics. The workbook gives students hands-on practice with major yearbook skills, while the adviser guide helps you build toward production at your staff's pace. Order workbooks at ybk.link/shop and view the Adviser Guide at ybk.link/adviserguide.

CURRICULUM AND ADVICE VIDEOS

Watch the full collection at **ybk.link/edu-videos** for quick lessons on theme, coverage, design, photography and marketing. The Adviser-to-Adviser videos also share practical tips from successful Varsity Yearbook advisers — great for your own pep talk or for student leaders on your staff.

KEY RESOURCES

The links below provide additional tools, guides and reference materials to support you throughout your yearbook creation process.

NEW ADVISER HUB:
yearbookdiscoveries.com/ybk-new-adviser

YEARBOOK DISCOVERIES:
yearbookdiscoveries.com

ACCESS eDESIGN:
myvarsityyearbook.com

NEW ADVISER BAND COMMUNITY:
band.us/n/a4afbd6dl3c2U

TEACHING TOOLS:
yearbookdiscoveries.com/teaching

RUBRICS & CHECKLISTS:
yearbookdiscoveries.com/teaching/checklists

PROMO PLANNER:
ybk.link/promo-planner

COVERAGE TRACKER:
ybk.link/traditional-ladder-template

COVERAGE IDEAS:
yearbookdiscoveries.com/coverage/coverage-ideas

THEME IDEAS:
yearbookdiscoveries.com/theme/theme-ideas

SQUARE ONE GUIDE:
ybk.link/square-one-guide

eDESIGN HELP:
yearbook.help

NOTES AND IDEAS

FIND THE LATEST VERSION
OF THIS RESOURCE ONLINE

VARSITY
YEARBOOK

VARSITY YEARBOOK