

# KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PAGES



## DEADLINES MADE VISIBLE!

After nine years of advising, my greatest challenge each year is devising a system that holds students accountable for their deadlines, both great and small. Last year, with the help of my editors, we finally hit on something that worked very well and made progress on deadlines visible.

We developed a deadline chart that breaks progress down into smaller parts and tracks progress through the use of stickers. The parts include:

**Team:** staff writer, photographer assigned to that spread, and section editor (S.E.) meet together to look at the layout and discuss shots, angles, the dominant, etc.

**Copy/Captions:** the staff writer must have the story and captions completed and approved by the section editor and copy editor.

**Final:** everything is on the computer and approved by section editor, copy editor, assistant editor-in-chief, and editor-in-chief.

During the first week of school, I buy the enormous box of small return address labels at an office supply store and ask each editor to create his/her own unique sticker using the template design in MS Word. They must print out their proposed stickers and have them approved by me before I hand them 10 sheets of stickers to print out. I challenge them to make a sticker that reflects their section (e.g., my underclass editors are known as “undies” and put a picture of boxer shorts on their stickers). Meanwhile, I print the chart enlarged on 11x17 size paper and hang the first three deadlines on the wall.

When the staff writer completes each stage of his/her deadline, the appropriate editor gives a sticker to add to the chart. If a deadline is missed NO STICKER IS EVER GIVEN (we actually wrote the date the spread was completed in the space instead) and we have immediate and ongoing awareness of who consistently meets or misses deadlines. This was

**Master Deadline # 1**

Staffer	Team	Copy	Final
Lauren A. <i>Michelle's okie dokie</i>	S.E. approved	S.E. approved Carlos Done!	S.E. approved Carlos Tommy Libby MADE IT! chalk one up
Jessie A. 9-2	S.E. approved	S.E. approved Carlos Done!	S.E. 9-7 Carlos Tommy Libby MADE IT! chalk one up
Jenna B. <i>Michelle's okie dokie</i>	S.E. approved	S.E. 9-4 Carlos Done!	S.E. approved Carlos Tommy Libby MADE IT! 9-2
Lauren B. <i>Michelle's okie dokie</i>	S.E. approved	S.E. approved Carlos Done!	S.E. approved Carlos Tommy Libby MADE IT! chalk one up
Michelle C. <i>Michelle's okie dokie</i>	S.E. approved	S.E. 9-5 Carlos Done!	S.E. approved Carlos Tommy Libby MADE IT! chalk one up
Jen C. 9-2	S.E. approved	S.E. approved Carlos 9-4	S.E. approved Carlos Tommy Libby Done! 9-9 chalk one up

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particularly helpful when the staff members started interviewing for their editor positions in the spring. No one could argue with the chart.



Depending on your system, your final approval may stop with the editor-in-chief. On my staff, I have the final stamp of approval: a giant round sticker (“Michelle’s Okie Dokie”) that the staffer puts under his/her name in the first box.

When we completed each deadline, I kept the chart up for another week and gave out awards to the staff member who had received all of their stickers. I also kept every chart and looked at them at grading periods. It was very easy to assign point values to each sticker depending on the importance we place on the various stages. For the first time, my grading became a little more objective.

Additionally, last year was my turn to be evaluated and, because this was a new system, I used it as one of my goals. At the end of the year, the principal asked me to survey my staff and see how they felt about the new system. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest), the average rating for effectiveness was a 4.9, based on 40 member staff surveys. They loved the visual effect and the constant reminder in the classroom. They also understood the implications that not receiving stickers would have on their grades. Thankfully I have very responsible editors who will not be bullied into giving stickers out unless earned. Finally, the editors loved creating and using their stickers. I’m convinced that I have found a system that works!

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