

MORE ONLINE

Check out LearnYBK.com for more inspiration, guidance and skill-building.

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HERFF JONES  BY YOUR SIDE.

▶ SECTION SIX

REPORTING AND WRITING

HOW TO YEARBOOK

five

TAKEAWAYS

TO MAKE YEARBOOKING SUCCESSFUL

- 1 Writing captions**
Captions are easier than they appear. Using the formula, every student in class will write journalistic captions. **p. 16**
- 2 Understand tense**
It's easy to learn and easier to forget. Make sure writers and editors have a close eye on the past tense. **p. 29**
- 3 Understanding reporting**
We are reporters. Not writers. Help students understand the difference and win the battle against editorializing. **p. 06**
- 4 Interviewing essentials**
Nobody is comfortable on their first interview. Nobody is comfortable on their second interview. Practice and prepare what you can. **p. 09**
- 5 Identifying angle**
If you want people to read the book, you need to earn their attention. Writing tight stories that define the year is your best selling strategy. **p. 14**

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REPORTING AND WRITING

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		▶ Skill-builder A list of words to automatically edit out.

In the spotlight

► While this is a photo of a student rapping at a dance, the story could be about his first time performing in front of an audience, the audience's reaction to his singing or the DJ's experience asking for participation.

KATHERINE LAKE • NORTH CROSS SCHOOL • ROANOKE, VA

**A RECIPE
FOR MAKING
A WRITER:**
HAVE THEM
FEEL A LITTLE
OUT OF PLACE
EVERYWHERE.
HAVE THEM BE
AN OBSERVER,
KIND OF ALL
THE TIME.

REPORTING AND WRITING

WORDS
TO KNOW**Alternative copy**

- ▶ A different method of storytelling which can either expand on a central theme or show a completely new angle. Concise and easy to read. Includes lists, quotes, personal narratives, surveys and other formats that accurately tell the story.

Angle

- ▶ A writer's specific focus on a broader topic. For example, on a theater spread: The star of the musical was almost late to opening night because he was pitching in the state final game, as opposed to facts and figures about the star.

Attribution

- ▶ Identification of the person who said the words being quoted or paraphrased. Crediting a quote to its source. Should be written: Comma quote name said.

Caption

- ▶ Identifies the who, what, where, when, why and how of a picture. Formula: ABCDQ. Action, basic information, complementary sentences, descriptive quote.

**WRITERS
READ**

Read everything.

Ask if there

is room in the

class's budget

to get a student

subscription to

the New York

Times, Wall

Street Journal,

Washington Post,

New Yorker or

The Atlantic.

Or read as many

free articles as the

sites allow.

Close-ended question

- ▶ Can be answered with one or two words. A yes/no question. Used to obtain facts, figures and other specifics. Should be followed by an open-ended question.

Copy

- ▶ The stories. Every spread should contain at least one story, also called a copy block containing mostly colorful student quotes.

Digest coverage

- ▶ Coverage that is broken into bite sized chunks. Comes from the idea that it is easy to digest. Short for "the Reader's Digest version." Or, a shortened condensed version of a story. Brevity in reporting allows for more modules to appear on a spread.

Dominant story

- ▶ The most prominent story on a spread. Typically goes along with the dominant photo in the photo package and has the largest headline.

Editorializing

- ▶ When reporters provide their opinions to readers. Editorializing must be avoided in yearbook copy. Reporters should remain objective and allow readers to establish their own opinions based on the information presented.

Feature story

- ▶ A story worthy of standing alone. These are personal profiles or just well-told stories.

Headline

- ▶ A line of large type used to tell the reader what follows in the copy below. It introduces the topic and serves as a main visual point of interest on the spread.

Interview

- ▶ A conversation between a reporter and a source to obtain information and quotes to use in copy.

Lead

- ▶ An attention-grabbing introduction setting the tone for the story.

Lead-ins

- ▶ Caption starters. These are two-to-three-word cues to the reader that a new caption is beginning. Use them consistently in each section.

Open-ended question

- ▶ Cannot be answered with one or two words. Requires the respondent to describe actions and reactions, and could have a different response from every person you ask.

**LEARN FROM
THE PROS**

Pick apart what they do. Bring it

back to your

own writing. You

can't get better

if you don't

have models.

**INSPIRATION
IS ALL
AROUND**

Read strong

memoirs. Analyze

how they tell

longform stories.

Read Strunk and

White's Elements

of Style. What

they say is law.

Listen to the

Longform

podcast. All

journalists start

somewhere.

Personal profile

- ▶ Highlights one person, assuming that person's story will capture enough attention to stand alone. The quotes come primarily from the subject of the profile.

Quote

- ▶ A direct statement a reporter obtains through a face-to-face interview. Quotes are included word-for-word in copy, are set off with quotation marks and include attribution.

Source

- ▶ The person a reporter interviews. A "source" of information.

Story

- ▶ Narrows a broad topic into a specific narrative. Shows a variety of perspectives by including quotes from a broad spectrum of people. Remember: one topic, one story.

Style guide

- ▶ A list of guidelines a writer uses to maintain consistent punctuation, capitalization and school-specific rules. Use the Associated Press Style Guide as a starting point. It ain't your MLA, that's for sure.

Subhead

- ▶ A smaller headline accompanying the main headline and providing specific, detailed information about the story.

Transition

- ▶ A sentence a writer uses to link one fact or quotation to another in a piece of copy.

UNDERSTANDING REPORTING

 **Essentials** ▶ Learn the process to report like the professionals.

Pre-angle

- ▶ Start with some clue of where you want the story to go. Approach the subjects in your story with something. You will need to research. Talk to your friends and peers and ask questions.

Pre-interviews

- ▶ Interview people about potential angles for your story. Your job is to find out what is really happening. Don't write a story about your friends, but do talk to your friends to find a story.

Access

- ▶ Contact whoever is in charge of your topic. Let them know what you are doing and when you need to be in a certain place. Ask permission. Then, ask about potential angles. Be courteous and professional. Clear communication is one of the keys to your story.

REMAIN CALM

Remember, an interview is just a conversation and most people love to talk about themselves. Allow them to do so. Listen.

Observation

- ▶ Observe your subjects in action. You never know which moment will become your lead.

Interview prep

- ▶ Prepare questions ahead of time. Type them. Study them. Because you've observed the subject, you will be able to ask specific questions.

Angle

- ▶ At this point in the process, you should have a clear understanding of where you are headed. It may change during your interview if a new topic arises.

Interviews/new angle

- ▶ Remember all the tips you've learned in your class, and remember, if you come up with a better angle during the interview, it's OK to change. Conduct the interview like a conversation.



FOR STARTERS

Consider group interviews. When more people are together everyone relaxes. Team up reporters and gather small groups of two or three interviewees.

More interviews

- ▶ It is OK to call an interviewee to ask more questions, clarify answers and check facts. Make sure you have a way to contact them.

Write the story

- ▶ Sit down. Take the time to write thoughtful copy.

Edit the story

- ▶ There is no excuse for turning in copy with spelling, grammatical and style errors. Use your resources and spell check, but remember, spell check doesn't catch everything.

OBSERVATION SKILLS

Skill-builder

Practice the act of noticing everything around you.



STEPS TO MAKE AN INTERVIEW WORK

Skill-builder

RECORD, REFLECT AND REPEAT

Understand how to get the best quotes for your story.

- ▶ Pair up and observe your partner for one minute without talking or looking away.
- ▶ At the end of the minute, write what you observed with as much detail as possible.
- ▶ Take turns interviewing each other about something specific you observed.
- ▶ When you are done interviewing, take turns introducing partners to the class, including specific observations and what you learned from the interview.
- ▶ Notice how you can use observations to find a story.
- ▶ How did those observations improve the level of copy you would write about your partner?

REMEMBER

A reporter's job

begins before a

story is assigned.

Every day is filled

with story-making

moments. Make

sure you are paying

attention.

Don't stop at

generalizations.

Don't summarize

a conversation.

Record specific

quotes, expressions,

environments and

interruptions.

Develop your


eye for detail.

Skill-builder

'X' MARKS THE SPOT

Take note of the world around you to find story ideas.

1. Draw an X across a piece of paper, starting at the upper corner and going down to the bottom corner.
2. Dedicate the space at the top to things you did, the right side to things you heard, the left side to things you saw and the bottom to a drawing of something you saw.
3. Carry this paper around with you all day. Take time to record your observations as they happen. Record at least five of each.
4. Make these detailed. Exact quotes, specific descriptions, acute emotion.
5. Continue this practice for the rest of the week or as long as you would like. You may even stumble upon story ideas.

 **Essentials** ▶ You can't write a good story without talking to people. Find sources, listen to them, allow them to tell their stories and ask follow-up questions until you have your story. Follow these tips.

Prepare

- ▶ Journalists must know what they need to ask before they begin an interview. Talk to other students, coaches and teachers. Do what it takes, and write those questions down.

Ask open-ended questions

- ▶ These begin with "How" "What" "Where" "When" and "Why" They start conversations which lead to the information you want. And don't ask two questions at once. Make them answer the tough questions.

Be quiet

- ▶ If you stop talking, they'll start. Smile and nod. Don't interrupt. Let silence linger longer than a normal conversation. They will keep talking.

Care

- ▶ If you show your subject you think their story is important, they are more likely to open up to you.

Keep them in the know

- ▶ Tell your interviewee what you're writing about (in general). They might help you stay on topic.

Edit

- ▶ Revision is not just for the finished product. Quotes matter. They should only be as long as they are relevant. Keep only necessary words in the necessary quotes.

- ▶ Record a "big story" interview and a series of quick interviews.

- ▶ Listen and take notes. What did you do right? What did you do wrong? Did you interrupt the interviewee? Did you ask close-ended questions? Did you let them skip a tough question by following with an easy one?

- ▶ Learn from your mistakes. Write reminders in your notebook. You'll be a better reporter.

Remember

- ▶ Sitting in the yearbook room, writing a story without doing any research or interviewing anyone is not reporting.
- ▶ Asking someone to "give you a quote" is not reporting.
- ▶ Put in the work and you'll get the story.



WRITING THE BEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Skill-builder

GET GOOD QUOTES

Understand how to write open-ended questions.

- ▶ Start with a spread in a sample yearbook.
- ▶ Write the first two questions that come to mind for an interview subject.
- ▶ Are they close-ended questions?
- ▶ If so, write follow-up questions for each.
- ▶ Then rewrite the question entirely so it is open-ended.
- ▶ Notice how this better tells your story?

Skill-builder

GET BETTER QUOTES

If you ask meaningful questions, you get meaningful answers.

- ▶ Arrange for a visitor to attend class to be the subject and introduce one fact about them.
- ▶ Jot down five questions, then start asking.
- ▶ After the first question is asked, tell everyone who also wrote that question to raise their hands.
- ▶ Repeat the process until all questions are asked.
- ▶ Remember, boring copy comes from boring questions. Think beyond the obvious.

CALMING NERVES

 **Essentials** ▶ Learn to ignore your fears and do your job.


You have to talk to strangers to get the best story. Don't freak out. Great journalists have gone before you.

1. Approach interviews with your job as a shield. You are not asking questions because you want to. You are asking because you have to. It is your job. Remind yourself: You are a journalist. That gives you permission to ask.
2. But still, let your curiosity propel you. You have free rein to ask the questions you've always wondered. You can learn about strangers. You can ask the follow-up question. You can make people consider deep questions. You can be nosy.

QUICK SKILL

*Compile a list
of ways you can
prepare for an
interview with:
A football player
A science teacher
A new teacher
A retiring teacher
A kid in a band*

3. Prepare for the interview. Rehearse a script for introducing yourself and asking for the interview. Research the subject, so you know what you need to ask. Write some prep questions, so you have something to ask if you start scrambling. But don't let those questions constrain you.
4. Don't procrastinate. If you think about what you are about to do, you'll let the anxiety win. Send the email, approach your subject or ask when they can talk before you can think about how the situation could go wrong.
5. Remember, they're just like you. Yearbooks are history books. What they tell you will be recorded forever. They're probably just as nervous as you.
6. Practice, practice, practice. The more you interview, the better you get. When you succeed, you'll know you can do it next time.

 **Next level** ▶ Writing copy starts with writing interview questions to gather facts and obtain quotes. The better the questions, the better the quotes. Develop open- and close-ended questions to begin the interview.

An open-ended question cannot be answered with one or two words. It could have a different response from every person you ask. The respondent must describe actions and reactions. It is asked with the intention of collecting a quote.

Ex.
Describe your reaction to the principal's announcement.
Why did you choose to participate in this service project?
What qualities do you value most in a friend?

A close-ended question can be answered with "yes," "no," or one or two words. It is used to obtain facts, figures and other specifics. It must be followed by an open-ended question to get the quotes.

Ex.
What is your favorite subject?
What do you like about it?
Do you have an after-school job? How do you balance your responsibilities at school and work?
Did you attend the homecoming dance? How did the committee change it from last year.

UNDERSTANDING INTERVIEWS



Expert ▶ Understand how to ask the best questions.

Be prepared

- ▶ Draft a list of questions to guide you through the interview. Alternate close-ended questions requiring short, factual answers with open-ended questions inviting the source to tell a story or reveal an opinion. Your list of questions is a starting point for the interview. Interviews are conversations. When you find their passion, move the conversation in that direction.

Introduce yourself

- ▶ When you approach your source, introduce yourself by stating your name, your involvement with the yearbook staff and your purpose. As you introduce yourself, make eye contact. If you are interviewing an adult, shake hands.

Have a conversation

- ▶ Instead of barreling headlong through your list of prepared questions, take a conversational approach, but remember to let your interviewee do most of the talking. If you stay quiet, the interviewee will be more likely to talk. Respond to what your source is saying by asking appropriate follow-up questions and repeating back important parts of the conversation.

Maintain eye contact

- ▶ Don't bury your nose in your reporter's notebook. Make eye contact with the person you are interviewing. Eye contact indicates you are listening carefully.

Skill-builder

TRADING SPACES

Put interview skills into action

- ▶ Share with a partner the story behind the last photo you took.
- ▶ Let your partner interview you to find the story. Then switch roles.
- ▶ Form possible story ideas based on this one photo.
- ▶ Conduct this process with random students, but make sure they are comfortable sharing.
- ▶ See how many stories are waiting to be told.

Take good notes

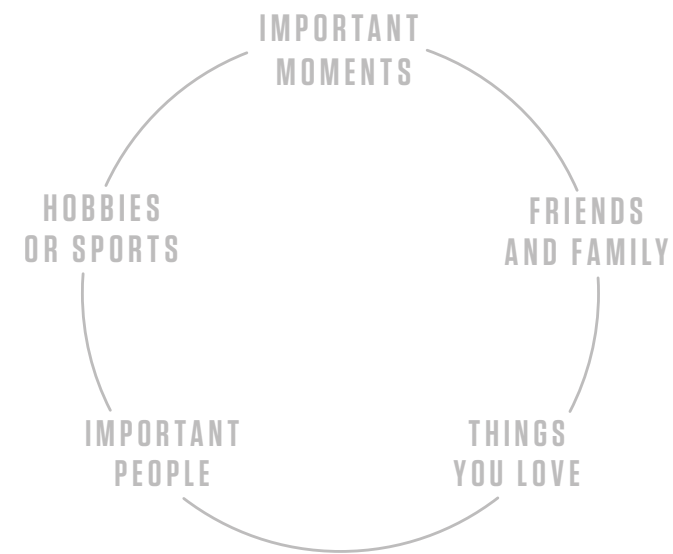
- ▶ As you listen, take notes. Jot down key phrases to remember later. If you plan to use something the source says as a direct quote, read it back to the person to guarantee accuracy. Even better, record the interview so you can play it back as you write to check accuracy, especially for quotes. If you record the interview, you still need to take notes. Write the important moments so you'll remember when you listen to the recording.

Guide the conversation

- ▶ You are responsible for guiding the conversation. If the source starts to ramble off course, use your list of prepared questions to get back to the topic at hand.

End the interview

- ▶ Review your notes. Double check any names, dates and facts. Repeat direct quotes so your sources can hear their words aloud and verify that your notes are correct. Ask your sources if they have anything to add. Finally, ask permission to return if you have any additional questions, and thank them for their time.



Skill-builder

WEBBING WORK

Have a plan for your informal interview. Use the web above.

- ▶ Approach random students using the coverage plan your staff decides to implement.
- ▶ Take this web with you. Ask the student's name and spell it correctly in the center.
- ▶ Ask the student about one of the surrounding topics. Does this spark passion?
- ▶ If it does spark passion, ask follow-up questions or set up a time for a formal interview. This could turn into a profile or feature story.
- ▶ If it does not spark passion, ask about one of the other topics.
- ▶ Ask about at least three of the topics before moving on. If you can't find a story, this could fit in a talking head module.

FOR THE SCHOOL

Check out the section on *Zero*

Zeros in Covering

Your School.

Yearbooks exist to preserve history.

Make sure your

history book

is complete by

including as many

voices as possible.

IT'S AN INFORMALITY



Next level ▶ Informal interviews lead to big stories.

- ▶ Before you can conduct a formal interview, you might need to conduct a series of informal interviews. These are short conversations with randomly chosen students designed to find the stories you might otherwise miss.
- ▶ Print a list of every student in the school, cut each name out and put them in a bucket. Exclude those you know will already be included. Draw a name and conduct informal interviews every day.
- ▶ Try approaching random students in the lunch room.
- ▶ Find what works for your school and your staff. These interviews help you cover every student and are an easy way to find interesting stories.

IDENTIFYING ANGLE

 **Essentials** ▶ After the interview, focus on angle to organize and tighten writing.

What's that?

- ▶ The goal is to tell a specific, engaging story while informing and entertaining your audience.
- ▶ Unfortunately, most yearbook spreads — particularly in student life and academics — cover broad topics. These broad topics may make for great photographs, but they can make for boring copy. To make copy better, choose an angle.
- ▶ Compare the concept of an angle to a thesis statement or main idea in an essay. You may begin with a broad topic, but you must narrow the topic to a specific, arguable thesis statement. All of the information in the essay helps to prove that specific thesis. Information that does not pertain to the thesis is left out.
- ▶ Brainstorm as many different angles as possible, discuss the possibilities with your editor or adviser and choose the one that will tell the most compelling story. The results of multiple interviews can also help determine the best angle.

Skill-builder

WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?

Identify the best storyline.

- ▶ Brainstorm five possible angles for each of these spread topics.

Summer
Chorus
Beta Club
Baseball
English

- ▶ Choose the best and defend your choice.

In motion

- ▶ This photo could be part of a theme package, but it could also tell a story. Angles for the story could be adequate time between classes, feeling lost in the crowd or finding your people in a big school



WRITING CAPTIONS

 **Essentials** ▶ Learn to write journalistic captions with as much detail as possible.

ABCDQ.

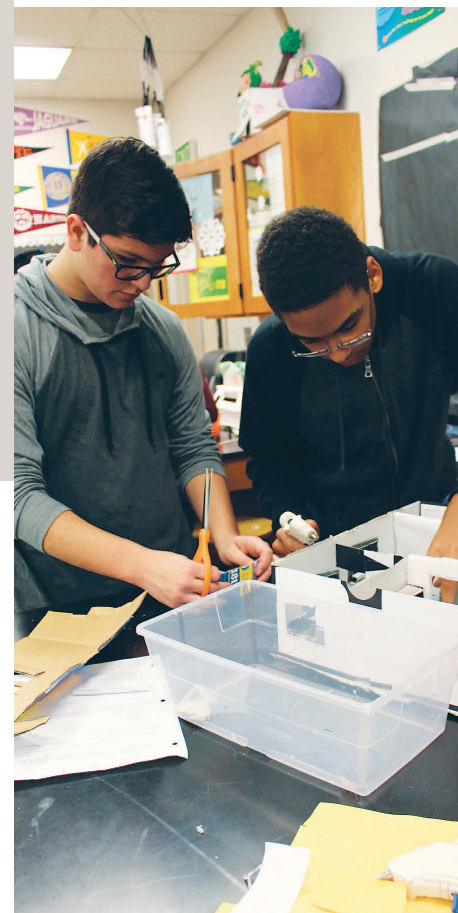
- A. Action** - Make it present tense. Describe what is happening in the photo. Active verbs matter here. Readers must be able to identify the photo based on the action.
- B. Basic information** - Give the essential information. Who is in the photo, what grade are they in, where are they and when is this happening? This can be part of the first or second sentence.
- C. Complementary information** - Give a little extra. Share something about the photo the reader would not otherwise know. This is the second or third sentence.
- DQ. Direct quote** - Include a meaningful, descriptive quote. This is the third sentence, unless you have a long storytelling caption, then it's the fourth sentence.

WHOA!

An ABCDQ caption is a mini story. Not every caption has to be ABCDQ. Simple headshots get a name and grade. Other situations may call for a shorter version. Mix it up!

Live by these caption rules

- ▶ Because the action in the photo never ages, write the action sentence in present tense. Other sentences are in past tense because the descriptors relate to a moment in the past.
- ▶ Don't state the obvious.
- ▶ Consider the action that took place before the shutter clicked and the following reactions. Include valuable information.
- ▶ Do not use joke captions. They create ethical and legal problems.
- ▶ Don't editorialize. Allow the action and the background info to tell a complete, factual story. Include the direct quote to help.
- ▶ Set and follow caption standards. If you identify students by grade level, do so consistently. The choice to use lead-ins is a section-wide decision.
- ▶ Make the introductory phrase visually distinct with bold face, color or all caps.



TOBY JOHNSON MIDDLE SCHOOL • ELK GROVE, CA

Skill-builder

OH CAPTION, MY CAPTION

Mark the ABCDQ in each of these captions.

- ▶ Gluing down a piece of paper, Ian Gonzalez, 8, and Johnathan Wellington, 8, work to finish their group's college dorm. They created a college dorm using a hot glue gun, a shoe box, scissors and a lot of paper. "I joined AVID because I want to go to a four year college. I think this project gave us an idea of what living at a college looks like and encourages teamwork between students," Ian said.
- ▶ In front of Sleeping Beauty's castle, Angela Fields, 8, Amelia Townsend, 8, and Soriyah Amali, 8, walk around Disneyland. The night earlier, eighth-grade students went to school at 10 p.m. to board the buses that were traveling to Disneyland. "It was so fun for my friends and me to walk around Disneyland without any chaperones because we felt independent," Angela said. "But my feet ended up hurting afterward."
- ▶ Excited, Jessica Bailey, 7, points at the jumbotron seeing that the boys' basketball team had scored a point. The seventh-grade Lady Jags and the eighth-grade boys' basketball team had competed against Albani in the semifinals at the Golden One Center. "My friend and I were sitting down and talking about who would make the first three, but then our friend Jayvon Evans, 8, ended up shooting them. We were happy that he made the shot and congratulated him afterward by saying, 'Good job,'" Jessica said.

PRACTICING CAPTIONS

Skill-builder

Notice how many questions you need to ask to know enough to write a caption.

Select a story-telling photo. Record as many details as possible about the photo. Form as many questions as you need to get all the information necessary to write a caption: Names of subjects, date, etc.

Lead-in

Sentence one: Present tense

Sentence two: Past tense

Sentence three: Get a quote

ALWAYS AND NEVER: CAPTION EDITION

Expert Work with different ways to author captions.

When you have mastered the caption formula, worked through different ways of writing lead-ins, conquered the battle of strong verbs and managed to fit in all necessary information, you're ready to move to storytelling captions.

- ▶ Never ask a question in a caption.
- ▶ Never change the type size or leading of captions on different spreads.

▶ Never use a photo for which the best verb is "poses." Posed pictures don't tell a story.

▶ Sports captions always require additional reporting: The date of the photo and opposing school's name, the opposing players' names, the outcome of the play and the final score. When more than one photo for a game is used, do not repeat the same information in any caption.

▶ Vary caption lengths and formats to keep them interesting. Sometimes, begin captions with quality quotes. No more than two captions on any spread should begin with an "ing" word and none should begin with students' names. The captions should not all be so formulaic as to be obvious to the reader. Don't end every caption with "last name, said."

Skill-builder

BULK UP

Create better captions for your yearbook.

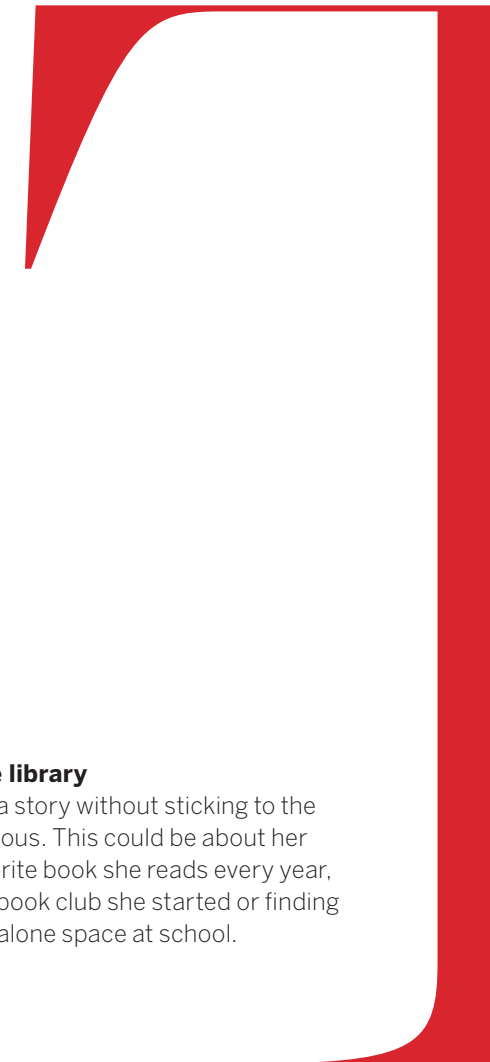
1. Using a previous years' book or a sample book, find poorly written or weak captions.
2. Strengthen the caption by adding any necessary information.
3. Answer all the important questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
4. You can make up information **if this is not for your book.**
5. Recognize how much work you put into making this caption better.

It is easier to put in the work at the beginning than to go back and rewrite, or worse re-interview.

MAKE YOUR
CAPTIONS
NEXT LEVEL



MAKE
EVERY
WORD
TELL.




In the library

- Tell a story without sticking to the obvious. This could be about her favorite book she reads every year, the book club she started or finding her alone space at school.

UNDERSTAND NARRATIVE

COPY

 **Expert** ▶ Give your most impactful narrative copy the space it deserves.

Stories

- ▶ Narrow a broad topic into a specific story.
- ▶ Show a variety of perspectives by including quotes from a broad spectrum of people.
- ▶ Maintain a specific angle, but that angle could be ways in which different people view a specific topic.
- ▶ Focus on events and topics and the ways in which people react to them instead of a person's story.
- ▶ Include three to five sources to ensure accuracy and avoid bias.
- ▶ This is a good way to include multiple students in one story and up your coverage numbers.

Ex. Breaking news, concert recaps and election coverage.

KEEP IN MIND

Personal profiles are worth the space if you have the right story, but don't force them when the story demands a different format.

Features are the strongest stories and can stand alone to break up digest coverage.

Personal profiles

- ▶ Highlight one specific person, assuming that person's story is in some way representative of a greater whole.
- ▶ Quotes come primarily from the subject of the profile, though including quotes from parents and close friends can enhance the story.
- ▶ Focus on a person instead of a major event or topic.
- ▶ Consider whether this is the best option for your book. Only one person is included in the story. Does this fit your coverage plan?
- ▶ Not all personal profiles require their own page or spread. They can be in sidebars.

Ex. Olympic athlete stories, someone's trip to Hawaii and recovering from an injury.

ANALYZE A FEATURE

Analyze the following feature story and answer the skill-builder questions on p. 25.

MAKING IT IN AMERICA Students from all around the globe — Seniors Elena Sanchez, Valeria Vakiy, and Tasneem Khan — make the most of Redondo's opportunities

Fire burns in senior Elena Sanchez's stomach and in her chest — she can't breathe. She and her family made it to the plane, but they have no idea what lies ahead. Sanchez knows where they are going, but she can't help but worry.

In these next few hours, her life will change forever.

Sanchez was born in Honduras and immigrated to the United States when she was 15 years old in order to attend school here. She attended private school in Honduras to avoid the government's corruption, so she was surprised by many aspects of Redondo Union.

"When I first moved [to the United States] it wasn't a culture shock because I had visited before.

[However], I never really knew Redondo Union. I thought the school was huge because at my old school, my entire class was only nine people," she said.

Over time, Sanchez grew accustomed to her new school.

"What I like about RUHS is that everyone is welcoming, and there are people from every background. I [have] met a couple people from Honduras, and there's other Hispanic people, too," Sanchez said.

In Honduras, Sanchez's family owned a printing press and a party planning business, so her parents were constantly working. Here in America, however, Sanchez has had the time to grow closer to her parents and learn more about herself.

"[I've learned] the importance of what to value in life, how love is so important, and [that] you should be grateful for everything you have, because life can switch on you in any moment," she said.

Like Sanchez, senior Valeria Vakiy moved to America when she was 15 years old so that she could live with her mother. After living with her grandmother in London, England, Vakiy made her way across the Atlantic Ocean with no idea of what her new home would be like. "I had only been to America a few times to visit, and I just thought it would be like the movies. Like there would be mean people or geeks, stuff like that.

"When I moved, it seemed a little like the movies because the football games were pretty spirited, but it is completely different than I expected. People are not how I thought they would be, everyone was so nice and welcoming," Vakiy said.

Although she left her family and her friends behind, Vakiy is grateful for her education in America and the opportunities it has given her.

"I've grown up more here than I could have over there. [Living here] has provided me with classes that can help me with my future.

Taking AP classes has opened up opportunities for universities and colleges. It really has given me great opportunities," she said.

"I think if I had stayed in England, I would not have become so successful with my school work. I wouldn't be taking harder classes and challenging myself."

Education was also a large factor in junior Tasneem Khan's decision to immigrate to the United States. Khan has lived all around the world, starting in South Africa, then New Zealand, Australia, France, and eventually America. For one vacation, she and her family took a road trip to 25 states in the U.S. in order to determine which state they wanted to live in. Khan's mother liked Texas, while her sister loved New York. Khan, however, fell in love with California.

After the trip, Khan and her family decided they wanted to move to America for its education. "One of the reasons I wanted to come to the states was for the colleges. America offers such a wide variety of studies. Since New Zealand is such a small country, they offer specific career choices like medicine and science. For me, I want to study music and there are better programs [in America] for that," Khan said.

Khan hopes to use the opportunity of attending college here to become a film composer. "Hopefully, with the colleges here, I can meet composers, work in ensembles and orchestras, work with current students and teachers, and even more," Khan said.

Nearly 3,000 students come together at Redondo every single day — all from different backgrounds, here for different reasons. Whether it is to find opportunities in education, like Khan and Vakiy, or simply to find a new place to call home, like Sanchez, Redondo has opportunities for all. ■

LISA DIETHELM
REDONDO UNION HS
REDONDO BEACH, CA

ANALYZE A FEATURE



Analyze the following personal profile and answer the skill-builder questions on p. 25.

ROY BROWN. REALLY. Senior jump-starts his life after high school

"You can learn by sitting in a classroom, but you really see it all when you ride with a police officer for 12 hours. A lot of people think nothing bad happens in Salem, but you would be surprised at some of the things I see."

By day Roy Brown hauled books from class as a regular student. Outside the building, he held the rank of sergeant in the Salem Police Department's Explore Program. The 30-year-old program gave students interested in law enforcement careers a chance to get on-the-beat experience.

Brown directed traffic and worked at the police center at the fair during the summer, but his favorite experience was "ride alongs" in squad cars. Through the program,

Brown accompanied officers on their regular work shift to observe how they dealt with certain situations.

Brown watched first-hand as the officers made arrests, ran radar, pulled people over and responded to calls. "Each officer has different ways of patrolling so it's pretty interesting to watch," he said. Saturday nights were his favorite time to be tagging along since more excitement seemed to occur.

After being trained thoroughly, Brown and his peers traveled to Gatlinburg, Tenn. for competition. Each team competed in four sections of their choice. Brown's team chose crime scene investigation, unknown problem, DUI traffic stops

and felony stops. They placed first for DUI traffic stops, which involved a set up of a real DUI situation.

"They really try to make it as realistic for you as they can be," he said. "We had a blast and our Chief was really proud of us. I really want to be a detective in the cyber crime unit someday, and this really helped."

To augment his practical experience, he enrolled in criminal justice classes through Virginia Western Community College at the Burton Center of Arts Technology. He started each day there, and then returned to high school around 9.

On the flip side

Although Brown sought a future with law enforcement, he had also owned his own deejay business for two years. His interest was piqued by one of his friends who worked at a local Christian radio station. He sat in the studio with him and watched him while on air. Soon after, Brown and his dad invested in equipment, he bought a license and opened the business. "I keep all my equipment in storage, which is like my office or studio. I have to pitch myself to customers and hopefully they will like me enough to hire me," he said.

Through his side hobby, he learned a lot about business and handled the financial upkeep himself, after some initial assistance from his dad. "Taxes hit you hard. I even pay them on the microphones," he said. "But being a DJ pays well. I just recently had a party with about 500 people and was paid \$400."

"This is something fun I get paid for. I wanted to do all these things to get my life started quicker after high school." ■

**BECKY SHARKEY
AND SARAH COLLIE**
SALEM HIGH SCHOOL
SALEM, VA

DON'T FORGET

You can write a feature on anything, but you can only write a profile on a story worthy of standing alone.



BRENDA GORSUCH, MJE

"We would bring three or four kids in and put them in a circle. The yearbook kids would be in an outer circle. They would throw out a question and the kids in the inner circle would banter, talking back and forth, telling anecdotes. Record it. You are trying to capture those moments."

RETIRED YEARBOOK ADVISER
WEST HENDERSON HS
HENDERSONVILLE, NC

Skill-builder

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

Identify differences between personal profiles and stories.

- ▶ How many people were interviewed in "Making it in America"? How did the differing perspectives enhance the writing?
- ▶ How many people were interviewed in "Roy Brown. Really."? How did this enhance the writing?
- ▶ What was the focus of "Making it in America"? Why was this the best format to tell the story?
- ▶ What was the focus of "Roy Brown. Really."? Why was this the best format to tell the story?
- ▶ Which of these has a stronger story? Why is it stronger? How does the staff tell the weaker story in an interesting way?
- ▶ Which story covers more students? Is the less-inclusive story worth the space it took away from other types of coverage?

ALTERNATIVE COPY TYPES

 **Next level** ▶ Use alternative copy to enhance the main block.

Not all stories are the same. Find the best way to tell the story you have.

Fact box

- ▶ Additional information in short form. Statistics, history, definitions, schedules or trivia.

Bio box

- ▶ Profiles of people, places, products or organizations by key characteristics or information.

Quote collections

- ▶ A series of entertaining and informative comments from different people on a specific topic.

Q&A

- ▶ Dialogue from a conversation. Make sure questions and answers are distinguishable.

He said/she said

- ▶ Views from both genders on the same topic.

Skill-builder

JUST YOUR TYPE

Understand the story you are telling.

- ▶ Identify which coverage types would work for each of the following stories, then form an angle for each.
 - ▶ Conversation with the lead of the play
 - ▶ Changes in lunchroom layout
 - ▶ Controversial referee call
 - ▶ A freshman's first time on the football field

First person narrative

- ▶ A story written in first person from one point of view. Can be quotes gathered in an interview and strung together to form a coherent narrative.

Step-by-step guide

- ▶ A how-to that explains the entire process.

Glossary

- ▶ A list of specialized terms with definitions to clarify confusing topics.

Survey/poll

- ▶ Survey a wide variety and number of students, avoid bias and be accurate. Include sample number.

Timeline

- ▶ Listed chronology of events.

Chart/table

- ▶ Comparison of statistics or costs.

Map/diagram

- ▶ Illustrate key location of relevant events.

MELISSA KWAN • THE HARKER SCHOOL • SAN JOSE, CA

Face forward

- ▶ What are her feelings on photography class v. yearbook class? Does she publish her photos on a blog? What does she think about iPhone photography and Instagram?



UNDERSTANDING ACTIVE VOICE

 **Essentials** ▶ Understand the necessity for active voice and active verbs in journalistic writing.

Always write in active voice

- ▶ The subject is always acting. The subject never receives the action.

Why?

- ▶ A sentence written in active voice is always more powerful than one written in passive voice.

Active

- ▶ The assistant unlocked the door to the office.
- ▶ The receiver caught the ball.

Passive

- ▶ The door to the office was unlocked by the assistant.
- ▶ The football was caught in the end zone.

*run from
zombies*

Skill-builder

OBSERVE YOUR OWN WRITING TENDENCIES

- ▶ Choose one student to throw a ball. Describe the action.
- ▶ Choose another student to drop a pen. Describe the action.
- ▶ Choose one more student to run out of the classroom. Describe the action.
- ▶ Read over your descriptions. Did you write in active voice? If you did, was it natural? Why?

Skill-builder

CREATE A REMEDY TO PASSIVE VOICE

- ▶ Find three examples of sentences using passive voice in past yearbooks.
- ▶ Copy the original sentence onto your paper. Then revise the sentence into active voice.
- ▶ Notice how it is easier to write in active voice in the first place rather than going back to fix it later.


TRY THE ZOMBIE TEST

It is easy to slip into writing in passive voice. Try the zombie test if you are confused. If you add, “by the zombies,” after the verb and the sentence makes sense, you’re writing in passive voice. Try this with the sentences to the left. Verbs are underlined for you.



EUCLID MIDDLE SCHOOL • LITTLETON, CO

UNDERSTANDING PAST TENSE

 **Essentials** ▶ Write in past tense because yearbook coverage all happened in the past.

You are writing a history book

- ▶ Everything you are writing about happened in the past. You should write as such. Everything you write is in past tense.

Except captions!

- ▶ Write the first sentence of a caption in present tense because the action lasts forever in the photo. Write everything else in past tense.

Check yourself

- ▶ Always check your tense before submitting to editors. They will be grateful.

KEEP IN MIND

As you write copy, tense will not be at the top of your mind. You may unknowingly change tenses and then change back.

Dedicate one version of edits to checking tense.

WRITING

TIGHT

 **Next level** ▶ Find beauty in direct, precise language.

Specificity

▶ You must be descriptive, but you must be specific. Include dates, scores, facts, details about the day. Make the story unique to the school, but do not add unnecessary information. If you do not have a specific fact or piece of information, do not include it. There is no need to write the words, “many,” “some,” “a lot” or any similar words.

Opinion

▶ Do not insert your opinion in any way. You are reporting, not writing. Use the “Who said so?” test to make sure you attributed everything to someone.

Sentence length

▶ Place subjects and verbs close to each other. Ensure they agree in number. Your sentences will be shorter than you are used to. That is OK. Preferable, really.

COUNT YOUR WORDS

Words matter.

Don't waste them.

Take a story from an old yearbook

or one you're

working on now.

Do a word count.

Begin editing. Cut

out a fourth of

the words. Then

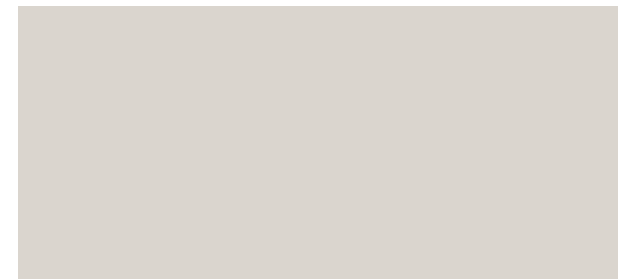
another fourth.

When only half of

the words remain,

see how hard each

word must work.



THE WHOLE picture

Nouns and verbs

▶ Try starting sentences with nouns and verbs. You'll fill the rest of the sentence with all the extra details.

▶ Use adverbs and adjectives infrequently. Tell your story with strong verbs and nouns. If your verbs and nouns need modifiers, they are not the best nouns and verbs for the sentence. Rethink and rewrite.

Paragraph length

▶ When your sentences are shorter, your paragraphs will be shorter. This is good. Your reader will thank you.

▶ Include only one thought or quote (40 words) per paragraph. You are allowed to have one sentence paragraphs. This is not English class.

▶ Take a deep breath English lit folks. You will get used to it.

Say what you mean

▶ You do not need flowery language. You do not need to hide your meaning behind elevated language. Show the readers exactly what you want them to see.

**Expert** ▶ Show, don't tell.

▶ This may be the most important writing rule. Paint a picture for your reader, but do not tell them what they should get out of it.

▶ Telling: “She ran to class on a warm spring morning.”

▶ Showing: “She wiped sweat from her forehead as she pushed through the crowded halls to her first class on May 3.”

▶ But never make up details.

▶ And never write generalities.

▶ See p. 48 for a list of contraband words.

Skill-builder

DESCRIPTIVE PRACTICE

Create the most thorough descriptions.

▶ Choose a small object from your backpack and keep it secret from the class.

▶ Write a full description of the object.

▶ Read aloud to see if the class can guess which object you chose, based on the strength of the description.

Skill-builder**Find emotion in description.**

▶ Spend five minutes drawing a floor plan for the house where you grew up.

▶ Label rooms, objects and places that mean the most to you.

▶ When you are done, pick one of the things you labeled. For the next five minutes, write as much as you can to describe this place, object or event.

▶ When you have described it fully, find what your angle would be if you were to write a story about your childhood home.

▶ Notice how many details preceded the story. This is how you research. You assemble all the facts and details until you find the story. Then you write with as much detail as you need.



EMPLOY POWERFUL PATTERNS

CHOOSING VERBS

 **Next level** ▶ The best sentences employ the best verbs.

Dead verbs

▶ Was, have been, were, are, did, etc.

▶ You buried them in sixth grade. Leave them in the ground. Tell the story without them.

Passive voice trap

▶ Remember our passive sentences?

▶ The dance, which was planned by the student council, was intended to welcome students to campus.

▶ Notice all the dead verbs in the sentence? When you write sentences with strong verbs, you are more likely to also write in active voice.

REMEMBER

*If you have to
modify a verb, it is*

not the best verb

for the sentence.

Strong sentences

are not the

result of flowery

language, but the

result of the right

nouns and verbs in

the right places.

Skill-builder

STRIVING FOR SPORTY VOCABULARY

Sports copy demands strong verbs.

▶ Take a sports story from an old book or one you are currently working on.

▶ Highlight every verb in the story.

▶ Work through the copy, replacing the original verbs with stronger, more accurate action verbs.

▶ Notice how this better tells your story.

▶ Do this with all copy before turning it in to editors. They'll be grateful.



Next level ▶ Professional writers are professional writers because they choose each word carefully. They write sentences with structure. Consider these types of sentences that may not feel natural at first, but will elevate your writing.

Three actions

▶ The star player *dropped her water bottle, grabbed her racquet, and ran to the court*, determined to win the next game.

Appositive

▶ The valedictorian's mom, *proud and tearful*, draped the graduation gown on her daughter. (*adjective*)

▶ *Mr. Jones, a cashier at Publix*, hung his coat in the break room. (*noun*)

Participle

▶ *Sitting in the hammock eating lunch*, we could see the river running across the mountainside. (*opener*)

▶ *Sammy, wearing a new blue and red collar*, strutted down the street. (*s-v split*)

▶ He hung around town, *saving cats from trees, cleaning litter, and hoping to save the world*. (*closer*)

Absolute

▶ *His stomach aching, his nose running*, Tom called work and asked for the day off. (*opener*)

▶ A drenched man, *his soaked clothes dripping with water*, ran out from under the waterfall. (*s-v split*)

▶ The child slept for hours, *his thumb in his mouth, his head buried in his pillow*. (*closer*)

Skill-builder

PROFESSIONAL COMPARISON

Read an article from a professional print news source. Underline the nouns and verbs.

▶ Do the same for a piece of copy you are working on.

▶ Compare the two. Rewrite your weaker sentences with nouns and verbs at the beginning of the sentence.

▶ Now, try rewriting a sentence with the noun and verb at the very end.

▶ Notice the change in strength.

Skill-builder**WORKSHOP
YOUR WRITING****Make your writing
better with peer review
sessions.**

- ▶ Gather into groups of three writers. Print three copies of the story you are working on. Take a deep breath. Hand a copy of your paper to each of your peers and keep one for yourself. Each writer has two stories and their own.
- ▶ Everyone reads the same story first.
- ▶ Highlight, underline and make notes. On a separate piece of paper, write the following. Then share aloud, in this order, with your partners.
 - ▶ What the writer did well in the story.
 - ▶ Where there is emotion in the story.
 - ▶ What the writer could do better.
 - ▶ A crazy suggestion that could completely change the shape of the story or could be completely ignored by the writer.

**Be respectful.
Understand people
are uncomfortable
sharing work.**

UNDERSTANDING REVISION

 **Essentials ▶ Accept that you might
rewrite an entire story.**

Revision is neither uncommon, nor something to be ashamed of. Stick with it. As you get better, you'll still have to revise like crazy. It is all part of the process. Don't be scared of revision. Use it as an opportunity.

Delete it

- ▶ If you indulge your desire to write flowery language and you think it is the most beautiful thing ever written, highlight and delete.
- ▶ If you insert your expert opinion, highlight and delete.
- ▶ If you found the perfect adverb or adjective for a sentence, highlight and delete. Unless it really and truly enhances the sentence.

Think you are done writing?

- ▶ Before you do anything else, read your copy aloud. If you stumble or pause at any point, stop and rewrite those sentences.
- ▶ If you summarized dialogue when you could have used a direct quote, rewrite with the direct quote. Unless the quote is boring. Then just paraphrase and attribute.

**DELETE YOUR
DARLINGS**

*Revision is the
most important
part of writing.
You can always
cut more. You
can always
clarify.
It takes time and
focus, but your
writing will
improve.
Revise, revise
and revise
again.*

Skill-builder**REVISION GUIDE**

- ▶ Circle all -ly words (these are your adverbs) Choose better verbs and delete the adverbs.
- ▶ Underline all verb phrases. List all the verbs. Are there any weak verbs, dead verbs or generalized verbs. Delete them. Write stronger verbs.
- ▶ Are any of your sentences passive? Is the subject receiving the action? Rewrite in active voice.
- ▶ Did you use present tense when you should have used past tense? Rewrite in past tense.
- ▶ Did you include unnecessary information just to make the story longer? Delete it and do more research.
- ▶ Let a classmate read your story. If it will improve your copy, take their advice.
- ▶ Leave the story alone. Move on to something else. Come back to the story at least 24 hours later. Read it aloud again. How does it sound now?

IT'S NOT
REAL WORK
UNLESS
YOU WOULD
RATHER
BE DOING
SOMETHING
ELSE.




Gather round

► Never write a “we’re all a big family” story. Instead, write about specific icebreakers from the beginning of the year, a time one member of the group stood up for someone else in the group, or how involvement changed a student’s experience.

RANCHO MILPITAS MIDDLE SCHOOL • MILPITAS, CA

LEAD THE READER TO THE STORY

 **Essentials** ▶ The lead is your introduction, but it does more than that if it's well written. Grab the readers' attention while introducing the topic and angle. It determines whether readers will keep reading.

SAMPLE LEADS

Tease the reader to continue reading:

"It's 6:40 a.m. Normally senior Jillian Fitzpatrick would already be up for 40 minutes getting ready for school, but not today."

WARD MELVILLE HS
EAST SETAUKET, NY

Introduce the readers to the subject:

"Wake up to 10 alarms. Snooze button. Snooze button... Shower. Brush hair "for like an hour." That's how senior Michael Horton starts his morning. Horton has a plan."

CORNING-PAINTED
POST WEST HS
PAINTED POST, NY

Set the tone for a story by setting the scene:

"It was the first day of her senior year. She walked into chemistry teacher Lisa Enneking's class late."

COLUMBUS NORTH HS
COLUMBUS, IN

Describe a situation in a voice fitting the action:

"Drenched in sweat, the boys lacrosse team sprinted to the field, finishing their mile. Then went straight to leglifts. Thirty, forty, fifty, done. Pushups. Fifty. Squat lunges. Fifty yards, thirty yards, ten yards left. Done. Water, finally. And then practice really began."

DUPONT MANUAL HS
LOUISVILLE, KY

Skill-builder

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Write leads for stories you know.

- ▶ Choose one of the following stories:

—*The Three Little Pigs*

—*Jack and the Beanstalk*

—*Hansel and Gretel*

—*Little Red Riding Hood*

—*Cinderella*

—*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

- ▶ Write three leads with three of the types listed on p. 39.
- ▶ Determine which fits the story.
- ▶ Understand, you may not always stick with the first lead you write. It must fit the story you are telling.

WRITING JOURNALISTIC LEADS

ADDITIONAL LEAD TYPES

Allusion

- ▶ Either literary, historical or mythological, an allusion refers to a well-known person, event, line, song or situation. It should be obvious enough that most of your audience recognizes it. Be careful of cliché or unintended meanings.

Ex. "Neither sleet, nor snow, nor hail, nor sectional postponement could hold back the girls' soccer team as it captured third place in the Lake Suburban Conference and ended the season with a 12-4 record."

Compare/contrast

- ▶ Points out opposites or extremes.
- Ex.** "They may look alike, but seniors Kyle and Kelly Andersen are like salt and pepper."

Descriptive

- ▶ Based in the sensory details of a scene, this paints a vivid picture with words and details.

OUT OF ORDER

If one section

of your

story comes

naturally to

you, write

that first. If

you are stuck

on the lead,

leave it and

come back

later. You

don't have to

write

in order.

Ex. "As the buzzer signaled the end of the second period, sophomore Pete Smith hobbled toward the bench, dragging his hockey stick behind him, one hand on his aching hip."

Narrative hook

- ▶ Allows for more creativity on the part of the writer.
- Ex.** "An icy wind whipped through sophomore Johnny Atwood's jacket as his snowboard flew off the rim of the half pipe."

Shocking statement

- ▶ Catches the reader off-guard with an unusual or shocking fact.
- Ex.** "The school cafeteria served up 6,000 pounds of french fries, 8,000 hamburgers and 15,000 slices of pizza every month."

Suspense/teaser

- ▶ Intensifies the readers' interest by holding back the main point of the story for a few sentences.
- Ex.** "When the bell rang, senior Betty Roberts followed the crowd of underclassmen into the locker room. She quickly changed into her uniform and left the giggling girls behind."

USING QUOTES

 **Essentials** ▶ Accurately attribute every quote.

Attribution separates sentences within the quote

▶ "I tried out for a solo, and I got it!" Martha Smith said. "I was really excited because it was the first time I had the opportunity to perform in front of a large group of people."

▶ Typical pattern:
"Quote." Name said. "Quote."

REMEMBER

Not all quotes are worthy of inclusion. Only use quotes that add meaning to the story. Do not use every quote you have. Oh yeah, and the period and comma always belong inside the quotation marks.

Attribution follows the quote

▶ "I tried out for a solo, and I got it! I was really excited because it was the first time I had the opportunity to perform in front of a large group of people," Martha Smith said.

▶ Typical pattern: "Quote," name said.

Attribution leads into the quote

▶ Martha Smith said, "I tried out for a solo, and I got it! I was really excited because it was the first time I had the opportunity to perform in front of a large group of people."

▶ Typical pattern: Name said, "Quote."

Attribution falls within the quote, and then interrupts the quote

▶ "I tried out for a solo," Martha Smith said, "and I got it! I was really excited because it was the first time I had the opportunity to perform in front of a large group of people."

▶ Typical pattern:
"Quote," name said, "quote."

 **Next level** ▶ Make the reader's experience smooth.

▶ Quotes are the foundation of your copy because they tell the story for you. But copy is more than quotes in list form.

▶ You must organize the quotes in a logical way, linking the quotations together with factual transitions.

▶ Make sure your transitions tell the story you want to tell.

▶ But remember, your opinion should stay out of it. Transitions should always be objective.

TRANSITION WORDS

Addition

again
also
at the same time
besides
equally important
further, furthermore
in addition

Chronological order

at once
at the same time
before
finally
meanwhile
next
soon
when
while

Contrast

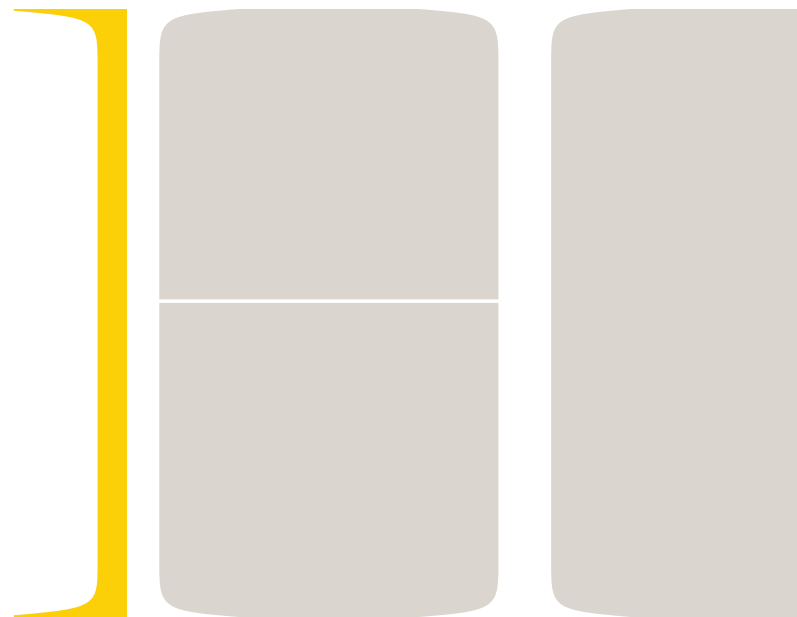
although, though
but
however
in contrast
in spite of, despite
nevertheless
on the contrary
on the other hand
yet

Explanation

for example
for instance
incidentally
in particular
specifically

MAKE
COPY
FLOW

MASTERING HEADLINES



Essentials ▶ Be patient when writing headlines.

Read the copy

- ▶ As you read, write a list of key words and phrases.

Describe the action

- ▶ Does your dominant photo match your list?

Form for favorites

- ▶ Write a first draft. Try those literary techniques you learned in English class: Alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, pun and rhyme.

Reread the copy

- ▶ What factual details from your copy will help you write the subhead?

Draft the subhead

- ▶ Identify key information.

Watch your tone

- ▶ Write the headline and subhead in a similar tone.

Don't go it alone

- ▶ Look to dictionaries, idiom lists, rhyming dictionaries and thesauruses.

THINK BEFORE YOU TYPE

*Headlines pull
the audience in
or scare them
away. Subheads
provide additional
information
without giving
away the story.*

THINK YOU HAVE A HEADLINE?

Does it:

- ▶ Identify the content of the spread?
- ▶ Attract the readers' attention?
- ▶ Reflect the mood of the spread?
- ▶ Tie into the action of the dominant photo?

Writers: Never ever turn anything in without a headline. Even if it is bad. You can think of something. And it isn't "Tennis story."

Skill-builder

PARTY TIME

Have a headline party

- ▶ Compile a folder of photos that need headlines. Display the photos one at a time and allow writers or editors to give a brief summary of the story.
- ▶ Blurt out words or phrases that come to mind.
- ▶ Never discount ideas immediately.

UNDERSTANDING CONCLUSIONS



Next level ▶ Write effective conclusions to complete the story.

Conclusions are complicated

- ▶ Even the professionals struggle with them. Keep these pointers in mind, but understand the skill takes years to master.

This is not a birthday party

- ▶ You must wrap up the story, but you must not tie it in a bow. For example: Don't ever write, "And that's why it was the greatest year of all time."
- ▶ If you start your conclusion with any variation of "in conclusion," you need to rewrite your conclusion.

The easy way out is sometimes the right way out

- ▶ Direct quotes are always good ways to end stories, but they are not the only way to end stories.

KEEP IN MIND

*You must also
be careful
of repetitive
endings. Not
every story can
end in a direct
quote. Vary your
conclusions to
keep your readers
interested.*

Skill-builder

IN CONCLUSION

Practice conclusions until you are comfortable.

- ▶ Grab an old yearbook. As you flip through the book, cover the conclusions of the stories.
- ▶ Write new conclusions for each.
- ▶ Uncover the original conclusions and decide which is better.
- ▶ Is one too sweet? Does one editorialize? Keep the conclusions short and to the point.

Skill-builder

LAST LINER

When you have finished writing, go back and delete the last line.

- ▶ Try this with a story from an old yearbook.
- ▶ Now, try this with a story you are working on or one you just completed.
- ▶ Does it still tell the complete story? Does it do a better job of telling the complete story?
- ▶ We tend to overwrite conclusions. We repeat information or editorialize or add unnecessary words. Don't do that. Just end it.

EVALUATE STYLE

 **Essentials** ▶ **The Associated Press is the be-all-end-all of journalism style guides. Start learning style.**

Names and titles

- ▶ Use Mr., Mrs., Ms. or the proper title with names of teachers and other adults: Mrs. Carol Amos; Mr. Bob DeLorenzo.
- ▶ The first time a name appears in a story, use the full name as the person signs it. Never use a single initial.
- ▶ After the first time a name appears, use Mr., Mrs. or Ms. with the last name for adults. Use the last name only for students.
- ▶ The first time a name appears in a story, identify the person with his or her proper title. Short titles usually precede the name, but longer titles usually follow the name. They are not capitalized unless they replace Mr., Mrs. or Ms. While Mr. John Myers, superintendent of schools, is correct, so is Student Body President Pete Fuscaldo.

Titles: Books, movies, games, etc.

- ▶ Capitalize the main words, including prepositions of four or more letters.
- ▶ Capitalize articles — “a,” “an,” “the” only if they are the first or last word of a title.
- ▶ Italicize the names of books, magazines, albums and movies and use quotes around chapter names, song titles and titles of other components.

KEEP IN MIND

Style guides are meant to help. They are simply rules and guidelines to follow to ensure you write consistently.

Learn the AP

Style Guide.

Live by the AP

Style Guide.

You should

memorize the

most important

and most widely

used rules, but the

best part of a style

guide is that it is

a reference and

there for you when

you need it.

Abbreviations

- ▶ Abbreviate Jr. and Sr. following a name. Do not use a comma between the last name and Jr. or Sr.: Thomas Myers Jr.
- ▶ Abbreviate long names of organizations after first use. Use no spaces or periods: NHS, FBLA, DECA, FHA.
- ▶ Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address: 3514 Locust Ave. Spell them out without a number: Locust Avenue.
- ▶ Always use numerals for an address number: 9 Morningstar Lane.
- ▶ Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use numerals with two letters for 10th and above: 137 Fifth St., 459 12th St.
- ▶ Do not use signs or abbreviations for percent, distances, weights or degrees.

Capitalize

- ▶ All proper nouns, months, days of the week and holidays.
- ▶ Names of sections of the country, but not directions: the Midwest, but he walked west.
- ▶ Short titles when they precede the names of adults: Principal Joe Johnson
- ▶ Full names of schools, clubs, organizations, streets, geographical areas or companies: North High School Chess Club, National Honor Society, First Street, Big 10 Conference, Westinghouse.
- ▶ Proper names for races and nationalities: American, Indian.
- ▶ Mascots of athletic teams: Bearcats, Bees, Huskies.
- ▶ Main words in titles of books, plays, movies or songs, including “a,” “an” or “the” when they appear first in the title.

MATTHEW MARDESICH • REDONDO UNION HIGH SCHOOL • REDONDO BEACH, CA

End it

- ▶ This was originally printed in a school’s version of ESPN’s body issue, but the story could be about his hopes of playing Olympic volleyball, reasons a school should have a boys’ volleyball team or favorite weekend activities at the beach.



**Do not capitalize:**

- ▶ School subjects except languages or specific course titles: algebra, journalism and language arts, but Algebra I, Journalism III and English.
- ▶ Personal titles used without names: The principal spoke.
- ▶ Street, company, club or other words unless they are part of a specific name: The Science Club met yesterday. The club elected officers.
- ▶ Abbreviations for the time of day: a.m., p.m.
- ▶ Seasons of the year: fall, summer.
- ▶ Academic departments except for words derived from proper nouns: English department, math department.
- ▶ Names of classes: ninth grade, senior.

Dates and times:

- ▶ Dates are written one way only: July 28. Never July 28th, 28 July or the 28th of July.
- ▶ Never add the year to a date within the current year, the book is about a single year. If an event occurred in previous years or is scheduled into the future, adding the year may clarify things.
- ▶ Do not use o'clock to show time. Omit zeros when possible: 3:10 p.m., 2 p.m., noon.
- ▶ Months with five letters or more should be abbreviated when followed by a date: The schedule in December is always crazy, but Winter Break begins Dec. 17.

Numbers:

- ▶ Always use numerals for ages, dimensions, money, percentages, days of the month, degrees, hours of the day, scores, room numbers, pages or chapter numbers and street numbers.
- ▶ Except for those in the preceding rule, spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 and greater.
- ▶ For money under \$1, use numerals and the word cents; for \$1 or over, use the dollar sign. Omit zeros when possible: 25 cents, \$10, \$1.50.
- ▶ Do not begin a sentence with a numeral. Spell it out or rewrite the sentence.

Use a semicolon:

- ▶ Between main divisions of a list: Officers are Lisa Smith, president; Chuck Wilson, vice president; and Bill Callihan, secretary.
- ▶ If you think a sentence needs a semicolon, try a period instead.

Use a colon:

- ▶ To introduce a series after the phrase "as follows" or "the following," but not after verbs such as "are" or "include." The club elected the following officers: President Kate Ashber and Secretary...
- ▶ In time of day, but not on the hour: 3:15 p.m., but 2 p.m.
- ▶ To separate minutes from seconds in sports times: 6:17.6.

Use a comma:

- ▶ To separate all words in a series: French, algebra, journalism and English. Do not use a comma before the "and" or "or" in a series.
- ▶ To set off appositives or nonessential phrases: Mr. Ray Smith, the journalism teacher, will be there.
- ▶ To set off nouns of address: Lisa, will you be there?
- ▶ To separate a quotation from the rest of the sentence: "I'll invite you," Mike said, "to my party."
- ▶ In numbers higher than 999, except for street numbers, telephone numbers or item numbers: 1,798 but 1305 First St.

- ▶ To connect two sentences with a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, so): I am not going to work today, and I do not plan to go tomorrow, either.
- ▶ After an introductory adverb or adjective clause: If you are interested, I will give you more information about yearbook camp.

Use an apostrophe:

- ▶ To form a possessive: Lisa's book. To form a possessive of a plural word not ending in "s," add an apostrophe and "s": children's toys. To form the possessive of a plural word ending in "s," add an apostrophe after the "s": students' notebooks.
- ▶ In contractions or to show omitted letters or figures: can't, don't, '84.
- ▶ In plurals of single letters and numerals: 3's, 7's, A's, F's, but not in plurals of numbers (1980s) or multiple letter combinations (RBIs, PDFs).

Use quotation marks:

- ▶ To show the exact words of a speaker: "That was a great game," Tracy Russ said.
- ▶ If a quotation includes several paragraphs, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last.
- ▶ Periods and commas are always placed within the quotation marks. Start a new paragraph each time there is a change of speaker.

Use a hyphen:

- ▶ Use with compound adjectives: 50-yard line, cherry-red dress; but he ran 50 yards, the dress was cherry red.
- ▶ Only used within words.

CONTRABAND WORDS

Yearbook copy gets a bad rap: It's often cluttered with platitudes and generalities. Here's a list of words to automatically edit out or replace with better reporting.

Always delete these words

- Very
- Fun-filled
- Awesome
- Really
- Seems
- Feels

And these punctuation marks

- All exclamation points.
- Semicolons. Yearbook paragraphs should be shorter than 41 words. A sentence with a semicolon will take up too much space. Simply break the two independent clauses apart and use a period.
- Commas before "and" in a series: Red, white and blue.
- Ellipses... Short sentences... are better than... choppy ones.

Avoid redundancy

- This year or next year
- The name of your school
- The name of your mascot

Avoid weak questions

- MY FAVORITE PART — Don't ask "What's your favorite part" questions because the responses are short and always contain "my favorite part of"
- FOR MY FUTURE — The book isn't about your future. It's about your now.
- NEXT YEAR — Sometimes athletes like to talk about next year. Bring them back to the present. "It's great that you're thinking ahead, but let's come back to this year. What would you change if you could go back and make some adjustments?"

Ask good follow-up questions

- DEDICATION — "Tell me what dedication means in this case. Can you give me an example?"
- DILIGENCE — "Describe for me a situation when you showed diligence."
- TEAMWORK — "That's great! Tell me more about how you developed the feeling of teamwork."
- BONDED TOGETHER AS A UNIT — "You know, I hear that a lot. Tell me how bonding helped you. Better yet, tell me some people with whom you bonded and how."
- A YEAR TO REMEMBER — "What specifically sticks out in your mind?"
- HARD WORK — "I know you work so hard. For that person who doesn't know how hard you work, describe your typical day in the gym/at band camp/at after school practice."

Avoid these leads

- HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED — "Have you ever wondered what it felt like to cheer in front of a huge crowd?"
- IMAGINE — "Imagine trekking through ancient ruins."
- NO MATTER — "No matter their political beliefs, students could always find interesting clubs to join."
- IN THE END — "In the end, they maintained positivity."
- FROM X TO X — "From winter to fall, the school's surroundings allowed students to enjoy every season."
- WHETHER YOU'RE X OR X — "Whether you're a freshman or senior, there are opportunities to get involved."
- SO IF YOU'RE — "So if you're looking to make friends for life, join this club."

Don't get all sappy

- ALL IN ALL
- IN THE END
- BECAME A FAMILY
- BONDED LIKE SISTERS
- TO LAST A LIFETIME
- YOU MAY NOT KNOW
- BEHIND THE SCENES

Personalize those generalities

- MANY, SOME, SEVERAL and STUDENTS should never stand alone. Instead, follow them with "such as STUDENT NAME" and you will see your copy improve immediately because it will become personal.
- Steer clear of "ONE." This isn't English class. Using names is being detail-oriented.
- "WE CONGRATULATE" — You aren't in the position to congratulate. Report other peoples' words and use a direct quote.
- "EVERYONE AGREED" — No, they didn't. You didn't ask every person.
- "WHEN ASKED TO RESPOND" — Your job is to ask questions, and to stay invisible. Just use the answers to the questions.
- "HARD WORK AND DEDICATION" — The most overused words in the yearbook world. Get specific examples.

It's this simple: Stop just "writing" and start "reporting"

- Copy and captions need meaningful, colorful, descriptive quotes to make them come to life. Make it a rule for every blurb to have multiple sources and for every caption to include at least one meaningful quote. Get more student voices into your book.