



School Newspaper Guide

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Suggested Set of Procedures



Jargon (Vocabulary)

Students will enjoy learning the jargon of the newspaper industry. Many of the terms found in the following glossary are important for your staff to learn. Make copies of the glossary to distribute to everyone working on the newspaper and encourage students to use appropriate terminology as often as possible.

Angle

The focus of a story; the approach a reporter takes to giving the facts.

Column

A regular series of articles or features in A newspaper. Also, the vertical sections of printed newspaper matter.

Byline

The line identifying the writer of a newspaper article.

Caption

(also called cutline) an explanation of a photo, drawing, or graph.

Classified ads

Small ads for goods or services normally listed by category.

Columnist

Staff writer who does a regular feature or article.

Copy

Text of an article

Correspondent

Someone who contributes regularly to a newspaper, often from outside the immediate area.

Dateline

The line at the beginning of a story naming the city or place of origin and often including the date.

Departments

Regular areas of news covered in a newspaper.

Display Ad

An ad that contains graphics as well as copy.

Edit

To make changes to an article for a variety of reasons: clarity, length, mechanics, and so on.

Editor

Person who manages the various sections of the newspaper. This person may also make editorial decisions regarding content, length, or mechanics. The editor in chief manages the entire newspaper.

Exclusive

An article based on information granted to one news reporter or newspaper.

Features

Stories about people and their lives rather than news-related facts. Sometimes called soft news.

Font

Style of type used in a publication.

Graphics

art, photography, charts, graphs, and other design features in a publication.

Editorial

An article on a timely issue that expresses the opinion of the writer.

Evergreen story

A story, usually a feature, that can be used at any time because it is not tied into a news angle.

Hard news

straight news, including all the facts.

Headline

Title of a news article.

Interview

A meeting in person or by phone in which a reporter asks questions in order to get information for a story.

Inverted pyramid style

The practice of placing the most important news information at the beginning of an article and proceeding through remaining details in order of importance. Most hard news is written in this style, which allows the reader to scan headlines and proceed to read as much information as is interesting or necessary.

Layout

The overall design of a publication, including placement of headlines, articles, and graphics.

Lead paragraph or sentence

the first sentence or paragraph in an article. It sets the tone for the article and hopefully entices the audience to read on.

Libel

The act of damaging someone's reputation by what has been printed or written.

Masthead

Title of the newspaper and other important publication facts.

Media

All forms of getting information to the public, including print, broadcast, and online.

News tip

Information a reporter receives that helps in the finding or writing of a news story.

Obituary

A notice about a person's death.

Publisher

Often the owner of the newspaper, who usually has overall responsibility for finances and editorial decisions. In schools this would probably be the teacher or advisor.

Putting the paper to bed

When the paper is ready for printing.

Retraction

A notice in a newspaper that cites an error the paper has made and is now correcting or retracting.

Become a Journalistic (Student Roles)

Editor in Chief (must have one)

This student oversees the entire newspaper. Their job is to see that all deadlines are met and that the paper goes to press on time. They also make editorial decisions when articles need to be shortened or cut altogether.

Assistant Editor

You may wish to have another student act as assistant. This provides great on-the-job training for future editors in chief.

Graphic Designer (must have one or two)

This is a job for one or two students, who oversee the organization & look of the entire paper.

News Editor (only for classes with 20+ students)

This is the student in charge of the "hard" news section, as opposed to features. This may include both school and community news, such as class elections or a community zoning issue. This student will assign articles to news reporters and establish deadlines for those articles. He or she may also do some editing on those articles.

Feature Editor (only for classes with 20+ students)

This student oversees the "soft" news section. This may include both school and appropriate community news, such as social events and interviews. This student will assign articles to feature reporters and establish deadlines for those articles. He or she may also do some editing on those articles.

Sports Editor

This student or students (you may wish to have a girl and a boy if there is a great deal to cover) will write and edit sports news. There is rarely a need for more than two students on the sports staff.

Tracking Manager

This student keeps track of what was covered in each issue so that the same teacher is not written up three times while someone else is never mentioned. This student would have a writing job as well.

Circulation Manager (not required during remote learning)

This student keeps track of subscriptions and sees that papers are distributed when they arrive from the printer. This includes deliveries to classrooms.

Reviewers of Books, Restaurants, etc.

One or two students may review a variety of media or a local restaurant for each issue of the newspaper. Remind them that they are writing an opinion piece and should follow the rules for editorial writing.

Advertising Manager

This is the student who receives classified ads, edits them for content and completeness, and organizes them for the newspaper. Students may advertise clubs, activities, etc. The advertising manager must reach out to interested parties and request advertisements pieces from them.

Roving Reporter

This student chooses an interesting, relevant question on which there may be many opinions and obtains those opinions

from as many people as possible for his or her column.

Reporters

These students, while not in management positions, are assigned to write for certain sections of the newspaper, including the advice column, lost, and found, and so on.

Art Creator

These students are responsible for drawing original art where needed or desired.

Brainstorm Article Ideas

Class News

You may wish to have a student from each class or grade level send their news to your paper. Alternatively, students can be assigned to cover classes or grade levels.

Editorials

Students may choose to write on kid-oriented topics or on more global issues.

A Word From the Principal.

Invite the principal or another administrator to contribute a column about school happenings.

People Behind the Scenes

Students may enjoy writing features on your school's unsung heroes, such as secretaries, maintenance staff, administrators, volunteers, etc..

School Clubs

Consider covering special club events or activities in your newspaper.

Calendar of Events

You may wish to include a monthly calendar of school-wide events. Although these schedules often change at the last minute, publishing early notice is often helpful.

Sports

In addition to coverage of interscholastic competitions, sports news might include notes from the physical-education teachers on what is happening in various classes, information on specific students and their athletic accomplishments, and coverage of league sports in the community.

Subject News

This would include news on special events in particular subject areas that may not be included in class news, such as a science fair or international festival that everyone will be invited to attend.

Restaurant/Book/Software Reviews

These reviews are always an interesting and popular feature.

Interviews

Subjects can be teachers, administrators, students, or community members. Be sure to include photos and follow guidelines for procedure and protocol before going out for interviews. Some interviewees may be willing to provide baby or school pictures to accompany their interviews.

Kids in the News

If there are students involved in interesting activities outside of school or who have accomplished something out-of-the-ordinary, you may wish to write about their activities for the newspaper.

Advice Column

Invite letters from readers asking for advice on certain issues. Letters may be written anonymously if you prefer. Answers can come from students, teachers, or school staff.

Hobby Column

Invite experts to write about how to get started in a new hobby. Old favorites might include sports-card collecting, model building, and stamp collecting. New ideas could include collecting autographs, postcards, or arrowheads; origami; cooking; and kite building.

Study Skills How-to

Advice from kids and teachers on making the most of your time. Topics might include study habits, how to scan a book, how to make an outline, and how to prioritize.

Places to Visit in the Community

What is there to see and do in your school's local area? Provide descriptions of places that might be linked to courses of study in your school or that are just-for-fun family places. Include prices, telephone numbers, and other important information.

Consumer Testing

Reporters can test and compare things such as bubble gum, sneakers, video games, or any other category of product that students express interest in. Be sure to follow procedures for product testing so that tests are consistent, and results are fair.

Games and Puzzles

Consider including crosswords, wordsearches, and similar activities in each issue. Activities may be theme related. There is excellent software available to help students design this type of thing.

Did You Know?

These are short bits that include interesting, little-known facts about the school, community, or familiar people.

Guest Forum

Consider soliciting features, editorials, or inspirational pieces from friends, parents, and supporters of your school. Perhaps local writers or journalists would be willing to send short articles.

Classifieds

This section includes ads contributed by people in the school who have things to give away or trade. Alternatively, students can promote their clubs using classified ads. There is no charge for this advertising.

Jokes

There is never a shortage of material for this column. Students can write original jokes as well as recycling old ones.

A Day in the Life of...

Reporters may enjoy spending a day with a teacher, administrator, staff member, or another student and writing an article about the experience.

Guess Who?

This is a contest with clues to the identity of a student, teacher, or other staff member. Try to offer a prize to the first successful respondent.

Roving Reporter

In this section a reporter asks one opinionated question to several people from all areas of the school. The question should be one of general interest.

Name:

Details Checklist

Article:

Issue Date:

Who?

Details:

What?

Details:

Where?

Details:

When?

Details:

Why and/or how?

Details:

Notes:

Newspaper Formatting

1. All copies should be single-spaced.
2. Include three possible headlines to present to your Editor in Chief
3. Spell out the numbers ten and under.
4. If your article takes more than one page, type MORE at the bottom of the first page and on any additional pages.
5. Include details in your article. For example, if you are writing about a class field trip, say where and when students went, what they saw, what they enjoyed. Get quotes from one or two students.
6. Place the newspaper issue date on your final copy.
7. Don't editorialize in a news article (write your opinion). If you wish to write an editorial on an important or interesting issue, see the teacher.
8. Use italics for titles of books, magazines, movies, and other major published works.
9. Use quotation marks around individual article names, chapters in books, and so on.
10. Make sure quotes are used correctly. Always obtain permission to quote someone in your article. Make sure you have quoted accurately.
11. Interviews should use this format:

Ahmed: What are your favorite things about Carolina Day School?

I like the students and the teachers.

If your interviewee makes only one or two statements and they are used as part of a news article, use quotation marks.

12. Use a teacher's first and last name the first time it is mentioned in your article. Then, use Mr, Mrs, or Ms. followed by the teacher's last name

Institute an Awards Program

One way to motivate students to do quality work is to create a program that rewards both excellence and effort. Do not limit the number of awards that can be earned in each category. Students might even win two or three awards for one article.

You can print terrific-looking certificates on a laser printer by using a high quality paper preprinted with an embellished border. This type of paper can be found at large office-supply stores or print shops or ordered from paper-supply companies. Or you can use plain paper and create certificates with borders by using programs such as Print Shop Deluxe. Here are some awards you might consider.

Excellence in News Writing

This is given for a hard news story that answers the five W's and makes a great, gripping read.

Excellence in Feature Writing

This is the same as above, but is given for features stories more about the "human" side of the news that are lighter in content and structure.

Excellence in Editorial Writing

Given for well-written editorials that clearly define issues and make good cases for agreement or disagreement.

Excellence in Headline Writing

Given for exceptional headline writing skill all its own.

Excellence in Lead Writing

Given for compelling first sentences or paragraphs that grab the attention of the reader.

Excellence in Page Layout

Given for the aesthetics of how a page looks including balance of copy to white space and use of graphics. This award is only be given to students who do the actual layout.

Excellence in Article Concept

Sometimes a student has a tremendous idea, works extremely hard, but still the article falls short. This award recognizes that effort.

The Publisher's Prize

Given for extraordinary effort and dedication to the newspaper publishing experience. This special award is only given when it is clearly deserved, and not necessarily after every issue.

Journalistic Style

Most of the writing that you do for your piece will fall into one of two categories: journalistic style or the editorial style. Journalistic style is used reporting hard news. This style consistently utilizes at least four of the five W's: who, what, when, where, why or how in the lead paragraph. It is important to understand that stating your opinions is not appropriate in this type of writing. Writing hard news is writing to inform, not writing to persuade. Facts must be stated clearly and without bias, allowing readers to form their own opinions.

Teaching Ideas

(1) Discuss the five W's (who, what, when, where, why or how) by supplying students with short news articles from your city or community newspaper. Challenge pairs of students to locate each W and mark it in the way you designate, such as by color coding. Tally the results to see which W's appear most often. Try to offer selections that present the five W's in a variety of ways.

(2) Have students write short news articles about a recent event at school. Invite volunteers to read their stories aloud and have students note the W's that are covered. If an important W is not included, invite students to add a sentence that will rectify the omission. There will be times when one of the five W's may be irrelevant, unnecessary, or unobtainable. Help students learn to discriminate.

(3) Practice news writing by taking your entire class to observe a school event, such as an assembly program. Each student is to work independently and should be prepared to take notes and conduct interviews, if appropriate. Return to your classroom and invite students to write articles on what they have just seen. This is a good time to discuss angles, focus, and approach of a news story. Volunteers may read their articles and comparative discussions should follow.

(4) Teach the concept of the inverted pyramid style of writing, using the reproducible on pages. The most important news facts, including the five W's, come first at the top of the inverted pyramid. The reporter must prioritize facts and information to correctly utilize the inverted pyramid, saving the least important (but still interesting) information for the bottom. Explain that editors must often cut articles to fit them into the allotted space. It is easier to cut from the end of an article than to go through and edit for importance. The inverted pyramid approach also allows readers to scan the paper for items of interest and become informed without reading beyond the first couple of paragraphs. Use photos cut from magazines or newspapers to practice writing attention-grabbing headlines and lead sentences. Be sure to remove any captions. Explain that readers often scan a newspaper looking for headlines, subheads, and lead sentences that pique their interest. Lead sentences may either be written as straight factual statements incorporating several the five W's, or students may use an intriguing statement or question to draw readers into their articles. You may wish to have students try one of each. For example, "The school cafeteria, which has tried for years to get students to eat vegetables, is proposing a new nutrition-based plan to get students to eat healthy." Or "On Wednesday afternoon in the cafeteria at Old Turnpike Middle School, a hungry group of twelve-year old students were invited to take part in a strange new eating adventure." Encourage students to share their work. Invite constructive comments from the class.

(5) Find examples of news stories that include quotes from pertinent people. Make overhead transparencies of the articles. Discuss with students why a quote might have been used rather than a paraphrase. Help them understand how a variety of sentence approaches adds interest and texture to their writing. Encourage students to practice writing news stories that alternate between facts and quotes.

Name

Date

Inverted Pyramid Style of News Reporting

Reporters often use the inverted pyramid style as a way of assuring presentation of the most important news at the beginning of an article. This enables readers to grasp the sense of an article as well as the main facts quickly and easily.

1. What event will you write about?
2. What headline will you use to grab reader attention?
3. List the five W's of the event in order of importance.
4. Note other interesting details in order of importance.

Editorial Style

Use the editorial style when presenting opinions on timely issues, whether school related or of a more global nature. While it is still appropriate to include some or all the five W's, you are not limited to these facts when editorializing. You are now writing to persuade. When writing editorials, it is important to understand that opinions must be supported by facts, and that a compelling argument is rarely based on emotions alone. If you are looking to change the way people think, which is usually the reason for an editorial, then you must present a mix of fact and reasoned opinion.

Teaching Ideas

(1) Discuss with students the difference between fact and opinion. Ask for their definitions of each and guide them to an understanding of the use of each in editorial writing. Reiterate that facts alone belong in straight news articles, while well-reasoned opinions (opinions supported by facts) belong in editorials. Provide articles and editorials from newspapers (both national, community, and school) and challenge students to find articles where reporters mix the two.

(2) Provide examples of editorials from local or national newspapers that deal with topics that students can relate to, such as funding for school sports or arts programs. Invite students to read the editorial. Conduct a follow-up discussion in which students express their own opinions on the issue as well as discussing the power of the editorial that was shared. Excellent editorials always inspire excellent discussion. Poll students to see if any minds were changed by the editorial. It is important and valuable to provide as many real-life examples of excellent newspaper work as you can find, whether from local and national newspapers or publications from other schools.

(3) Have students brainstorm possible editorial topics. Examples might include weekend homework, school uniforms, standardized testing, wearing hats in school, school-wide discipline methods, allowances, dress codes, or backpacks in the classroom. Help students decide on one or two topics that everyone has strong feelings about. Be sure they understand that it is important that editorials "speak" to many people, no matter how those people feel about the issue. Editorials on obscure topics that impact only a few people carry little weight. With limited space available, only editorials on topics of widespread interest will end up in print.

Name

Date

Organizing an Editorial

Effective, compelling editorials are well-organized, succinct, and powerful. Organize your thoughts by answering the questions below.

1. What issue will I write about?

2. What headline will I use to draw attention to your editorial?

3. What is my opinion on the issue?

4. What are three reasons for my opinion?

5. What are two reasons why someone might disagree?

6. Write the lead for your editorial.

7. On a separate sheet of paper, write your editorial using the information you have organized on this worksheet. When you have completed the editorial, use the checklist below to edit your work. Clearly stated at least once.

I have provided at least three reasons for my opinion.

I have supported my reasons with facts when possible.

I have demonstrated understanding of the opposing point of view.

I have written an appropriate headline.

I have signed my work.

Interviewing

The ability to conduct a good interview is a skill that will benefit you in a variety of areas. Every reporter should know how it has done. Editors may choose to run a feature interview with a faculty member or student each month. Or interviews may simply provide quotes for regular news, sports, and feature articles. Students should practice interviewing techniques with each other before going out on assignment.

Interviewing Tips

Make an appointment well in advance of your interview. Introduce yourself, mention that you are a reporter for your school's newspaper, explain why you would like an interview, use please and thank you. Then, show up five minutes early.

Go to the interview prepared. Take your notebook and at least two pencils or pens. Take a device to record with only if you have asked permission in advance. Have at least ten questions prepared. Keep in mind the five W's of news reporting. *Avoid questions that require only yes or no answers.*

- Ask your subject to spell any names you are unsure of.
- Take careful notes. If you plan to quote your subject, make sure you have the quote word-for-word. Recorders come in handy here.
- Offer to bring the first or second draft to your subject for approval.
- Leave your contact information with the person you are interviewing. Thank your subject for his or her time before leaving.

Students may try to run the questions and answers word-for-word as their entire story. While on occasion this has its place, it is preferable and far more interesting to turn the questions and answers into a narrative and alternate between facts, quotes, and statements. For example, instead of writing Q: When did you become interested in photography? A: When my uncle gave me a camera. I was about five years old, a reporter could write, Annie became interested in photography at age five, when her uncle gave her a camera.

Name:

Date:

Interviewee:

Interview Icebreaker

Who

has influenced you most?

is your favorite teacher?

is your hero?

Would you most like to meet?

What

favorite book?

favorite subject in school?

Favorite sport or hobby?

career choice? Pet peeve?

When

were you the happiest?

Were you the saddest?

is your birthday?

Where

did you grow up?

would you like to visit?

did you spend your best vacation overshadowed are you?

How

Would you describe yourself, using three adjectives?

Would you spend your ideal day?

Will you want to be remembered?

Why to any of the above questions