

## YOU'RE THE JUDGE

No book is perfect. Not the Gold Crown winners. Not the top books in the state. Not the Pacemakers. Every book has its weaknesses. Use the following checklist to find the weaknesses of your book and improve these areas in subsequent books. Be honest. And jot down notes in the space provided to give you ideas for improvement.

### Photography

Photographs make or break a book. Without good photographs, readers are less likely to even look at a spread. Despite the importance of photographs, photography is the weakest part of most yearbooks. Just as writers re-write stories, staff members should require photographers to produce work up to their standards or do should request that the photographers do it again.

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| <p>Y N Are you proud of the photography?</p> <p>Y N Do the pictures on a spread vary in content?</p> <p>Y N Have posed shots been avoided?</p> <p>Y N Have cliché shots (handshaking, plaque awarding, test tube, stirring empty pots, pointing at board, etc.) been avoided?</p> <p>Y N Have shots of individuals working at desks or talking on the phone been avoided?</p> <p>Y N Is the dominant picture the best one on the page?</p> <p>Y N Does every photograph have a point of interest and is it evident what that point of interest is?</p> <p>Y N Do photographers use the Rule of Thirds, keeping the subject out of the center of the frame?</p> <p>Y N Have photograph used different composition techniques (leading lines, framing, repetition of shapes, panning) to draw the viewers into the photographs?</p> <p>Y N Are all photographs cropped to the point of interest?</p> <p>Y N Are all photographs in focus?</p> <p>Y N Are photos properly exposed?</p> <p>Y N Are burned out highlights avoided?</p> | <p>Y N Have photographers used low depth of field to isolate the subject from the background?</p> <p>Y N Are group shots run so that they do not dominate on the page but so every face is least one pica tall?</p> <p>Y N Are the people in group shots tightly cropped at the sides, waste of the bottom row and just above the heads on the top row?</p> <p>Y N Are group shots top-quality shots? Can you see everyone in the group?</p> <p>Y N Are the people in groups set up in regular rows so identification is easy?</p> <p>Y N Are groups set up so that the longest row is in the back?</p> <p>Y N Do all photographs have good contrast and/or colour?</p> <p>Y N Have photographers varied the angle from they shoot pictures, getting low or getting up high?</p> <p>Y N Does cropping leave space for movement?</p> <p>Y N Have horizons been kept straight?</p> <p>Y N Have photographs of students faces, avoiding only tops of heads or backs been avoided?</p> |
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### Writing

As someone once said, "A picture is worth a thousand words, but a thousand words can give birth to infinite pictures." Writing is the meat of the book. It must be vibrant and interesting and students must want to read the copy. All text must be written in past tense and avoid editorializing whenever possible. First-person copy can be used on occasion for variety.

- Y N** Is the writing in the book something you want to read?
- Y N** Is writing informal and fun?
- Y N** Is all writing filled with specifics, avoiding generalities such as "many," "recent" and "few"?
- Y N** Do all stories use quotes from a variety of different people?
- Y N** Is editorializing avoided?
- Y N** Are sexist statements avoided?
- Y N** Are non-specific adjectives and adverbs avoided?
- Y N** Are correct grammar and spelling used?
- Y N** Is the use of a stylebook evident?
- Y N** Are good transitions used, adding information and helping the story flow?
- Y N** Does copy start with an interest-arousing lead, avoid label leads, time leads and weak quote or question leads?
- Y N** Are story endings as entertaining as leads?
- Y N** Are gag captions avoided?
- Y N** Do captions add relevant information, making each caption a mini-story?

- Y N** Do captions contain all of the essential information (who, what, when, where, why and how) without stating the obvious?
- Y N** Do captions show evidence of being as well researched as the stories?
- Y N** Do captions start with some attention grabber, such as an all-bold lead-in, all-cap lead-in or headline?
- Y N** Do headlines avoid editorializing?
- Y N** Do headlines avoid repetition of words and ideas?
- Y N** Do headlines do more than state the season outcome or something obvious?
- Y N** Do headlines pull the reader into the story?
- Y N** Do leads vary? Are they specific rather than speaking in generalities?
- Y N** Do story topics reflect student interests?
- Y N** Has good taste, awareness of the feelings of others, awareness of journalistic ethics been observed in every piece of writing?



Copy blocks should include headlines with active verbs. Consider also alternative types of copy, lists etc. And be sure to leave enough space for in-depth captions.

*Advisor: Sarah Nichols  
2011 Details | Whitney H.S. | Rocklin, Calif.  
Editors: Amanda Peterson,  
Katie Rogers & Lauren Roudebush*

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### Coverage

All aspects of student life should be reflected and the amount of space given to each should be in proportion to its importance. Student life should include special features on topics of interest to students and should cover the 12-month year, not just the school year. Try to get a true flavor of the students and the school.

- Y N** Does the book give adequate space to each section (student life: 20-25%; academics: 10-12%, people: 25%; clubs/organizations 13-15%; athletics: 15-18%; community: 3%; structure pages: 7%)?
- Y N** Are all aspects of school life covered without overemphasizing some areas?
- Y N** Are all spreads designed so that related content is on facing pages within the same section? Is each spread designed with only one main copy block?
- Y N** Are all varsity sports given relatively equal coverage? Are all non-varsity sports covered? PE and individual sports? Is there a scoreboard for every team sport? (Remember, on average, less than 30 percent of the students are involved in the organized sports program, but the majority of students are involved informally.)
- Y N** Are group shots down-played, making action shots the dominant photographs?
- Y N** Are significant club activities highlighted either in copy or in photographic coverage?
- Y N** Do the clubs/organizations sections truly reflect the year?
- Y N** Does academic coverage look at academics from a student/learning point of view rather than a teacher/instructing point of view?
- Y N** Does every people section spread have a headline, some copy and photographs?
- Y N** Does sports copy tell what happened and how rather than just rehashing the scores?
- Y N** Does the advertising section include some feature coverage on each spread?
- Y N** Does the book include coverage which helps date the year but avoids purchased photographs that don't include students? Does copy on these subjects show student reaction and/or the way that these things affect their lives?
- Y N** Does the book reflect a 12-month year?
- Y N** Does the clubs/organizations section bring the activities to life with specifics about the year rather than just a list of activities and officers?
- Y N** Does the faculty portion of the people section provide insight into teachers and show their contributions to the school/community? Does it show teachers as people?
- Y N** Does the people section coverage add to the telling of the story of the year, covering a wide range of student interests and a wide gamut of people?
- Y N** Is the full scope of the academic program reflected in an interesting and creative way.



Coverage within the book should be varied, including as many people as possible. Look for new angles on old stories. Look for ideas away from school. Try to really cover the school year from start to finish.

*Advisor: Dow Tate  
Shawnee Mission East | Shawnee Mission, Kan.  
Editor: Hannah Walter  
Assistant editor: Kate Kulaga*

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### Design

Design helps the readers know what is important and grabs their attention so they want to read the copy and look at the photographs. Good design helps communicate the message to the readers. The design of the book should be integrated with the theme from cover to cover. When designing a book, don't overlook the little things like folios, rule lines and bylines which can make the difference between a mediocre design and a great design.

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| <p><b>Y N</b> Are you satisfied with the book's design?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does design reflect the design trends of the year?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Has design and graphic use been consistent within each section?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Do all designs incorporate modular layout making it easy for the viewer to flow through the page?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does every spread contain a combination of horizontal and vertical photographs?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does each spread contain no more than seven photographs (not including mugs, paneled group shots and other "packaged units")?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does every spread have a center of visual interest, probably a dominant photo that is twice as large as other photos on the page?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Has a specific column plan been used for each section of the book?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Has all white space been kept to the outside edges of the page?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is an eyeline evident on most spreads and are near-misses avoided?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Do graphics add to the visual unity rather than call attention to themselves?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Are graphics contemporary, well-planned, consistent in use?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Are graphics used for a purpose, not just stuck on the page for decoration?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is the use of crude artwork avoided?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Are scoreboard consistent in design and type placement and size?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Are single columns of copy avoided for the main story?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Are the spot colours used reflective of the popular colours of the times?</p> | <p><b>Y N</b> Do caption widths adhere to the column plan?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is caption size and design consistent within a section?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Do captions touch the photos they identify without being "sandwiched" between pictures? Are all captions kept to the outside and never placed more than two across or deep?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does each spread contain only one main headline and copy block? If sidebars are used, is it easy to tell it is a sidebar rather than fighting with the main story for importance?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does headline placement lead into the story and avoid going past the copy? Is it never separated from the copy?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Does picture/copy placement vary from spread to spread?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Has inner spacing been kept consistent between all elements except where an isolated element or drop column have been used?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Have photos been placed so action comes into the spread and not off the page?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is the use of ghosted or mechanically treated photographs avoided?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is body type a consistent width, size and typeface within a section?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is extensive use of heavy black tools avoided?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is headline type attractive, easy to read and part of the design scheme? It is kept consistent within a mini-theme or section?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is the use of body type in coloured ink avoided?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> If spot colour is used, is it used creatively and attractively, adding to the spread but not calling attention to itself?</p> <p><b>Y N</b> Is type never allowed to cross the gutter?</p> |
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### Theme

The theme unifies the book. It gives a purpose to the book and a plan for every spread. The theme should sparkle with creativity and should allow the staff to highlight unusual aspects of unusual events. The cover, the endsheets, the opening section, the section dividers and the closing section all explicitly state the theme but special feature or mini-magazines tie the theme together without overdoing the purpose of the theme.

- Y N** Is the theme clearly depicted on the cover, endsheets, title page, opening/closing and on the division pages?
- Y N** Does the theme copy specifically and interestingly spell out how the theme fits your school on all the theme pages?
- Y N** Is the theme unique to this school, this year?
- Y N** Does the theme have graphic appeal?
- Y N** Are good quotes used in the theme copy?
- Y N** Does each copy block add something new to the theme.
- Y N** Is the closing short? Is it at the end of the book? Does it wrap up the theme story and give a feeling of closure?
- Y N** Do the photographs in the theme section depict the theme section? Are they vibrant and exciting? Are fewer and better pictures used on theme pages than other spreads in the book?
- Y N** Are dividers designed as spreads? Do the dividers carry the theme logo?
- Y N** Is their design similar to, but not identical to opening/closing design?
- Y N** Are the theme sections distinctive and different from other parts of the book?



The theme of a yearbook starts on the cover and continues through the front endsheets, title page, opening section, division pages, closing pages and back endsheets. It's like the plot of a good book, unifying the book. It may also appear graphically in the folios. Colour, rule lines, photos, text and other elements can all help carry the theme throughout the theme section and theme elements.

*Advisor: Eric Thomas*

*The Teresian | St. Teresa Academy | Kansas City, Missouri*  
*Editors in chief: Elle Rauch & Colleen Corcoran*

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### ***Don't overlook the little things***

The little things such as folios, index and colophon, if done well, can help the reader realize that the book was well-planned and help to unify every spread. Especially with the folios, consistency is the name of the game. Consistent placement and design help the reader. All pages must be numbered accurately and indexed. Every student's name must be spelled and indexed correctly.

- Y N** Are folios throughout the book consistent in size, design and kind of content?
- Y N** Do the folios identify content specifically?
- Y N** Does every spread contain folios on the lower outside of at least one page of the spread?
- Y N** Is the index attractively designed?
- Y N** Is the index complete and a single listing, including all individuals, clubs and organizations, teams, events, story topics and advertisers?
- Y N** Does the book contain a colophon containing all the technical and sales data about the book?
- Y N** Is the editor's note free from inside jokes?

### ***Remember what's really important***

Never mind what the judges say. Never mind what other advisors say about the book. Never mind what students from other schools say about the book. The really important thing is that you liked the book and you served the students, faculty, staff and community well.

- Y N** Did you like the book?
- Y N** Did the students like the book?
- Y N** Did the book serve the readers well?

*The colophon should be at the end of the book and should include things such as how many copies were printed, what they cost, who published the book, what equipment was used to produce it (from software to hardware to digital cameras), what kind of paper was used, what fonts were used and what spot colours were used. Acknowledgements should be subtle as should any editors' notes.*