

ACTIVITIES & ASSIGNMENTS

ETHICS

GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

Divide into 5 groups, one for each scenario below. Have each group discuss all of the legal and ethical considerations for the assigned topic and then report out their decision about whether it is legally and ethically acceptable to print the photos. If it isn't appropriate, then each group should tell what they would recommend that the staff do to cover the topic in a legal and ethical manner.

Have each group answer these three questions for their topic:

- Is it legally acceptable to print these pictures and coverage?
 - Is it ethically acceptable to print these pictures and coverage?
 - If it is not legal or ethical, then what should the yearbook staff do to cover the event instead?
1. While working on a spread about what students do on the weekends, a staff member goes to a friend's party and takes pictures. The images include students laughing, talking, and dancing while holding red plastic cups. There is no evidence in the photo of illegal activity at the party. There are rumours that some of the students pictured do drink alcohol at parties on the weekend.
 2. The editor of a student jobs spread decides that she wants to find people at school who work in unusual places. One of her classmates spends 20 hours a week in a rabbit meat processing plant. His father owns it and gives the editor and a staff photographer permission to take pictures and interview employees. In following the student through his tasks, the photographer is able to capture images of every step of the process, including removing a live rabbit from its pen, knocking it unconscious, hanging it from a hook, removing its head, skinning it, and so forth.
 3. To illustrate a story on teenage depression and "cutting", a staff photographer takes pictures of several students in darkly lit poses. Some images are headshots of a boy and a girl looking sad. Some are of the same boy and girl simulating cutting their forearms, but their faces are not shown.
 4. In a local bullying case, a sophomore girl created a false Facebook page to ridicule a female classmate. Repeated taunts and gossip caused the classmate to attempt suicide, and the resulting expulsion and lawsuit made the national news. A staff member who knows both girls was able to obtain a screen image of postings before law enforcement had Facebook take the page down. Staff photographers also took pictures of the national television and print press at work when they came to campus to interview staff and students. The local and national attention to the situation covered three months of the school year.
 5. There is very little time to get photos of spring sports because the final yearbook deadline falls right at the beginning of the season. When the staff photographer returns from the only game that can be covered, the page editor discovers that none of the varsity boys soccer photos contains a usable image with a key player kicking a ball. To compensate the photo editor uses Photoshop to cut out a ball from a junior varsity soccer photo and then places the ball in a varsity image. He places the ball in what would have been its likely position had the photographer been able to capture the precise moment when the player would have been in close proximity to the ball.

YOUR ROLE AS A JOURNALIST

Go online and research the following questions from reliable resources such as the Society for Professional Journalists web site (www.spj.org). From your research, answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

What is the duty of a journalist?

How can a journalist cause harm?

What ideals or standards do journalists need to abide by?

How does the duty of a journalist translate to yearbook production?

What skills do you bring to the role of a journalist?

The Bigger Picture

What published policies does your school district follow regarding student press rights?

What policies regarding student press rights, responsibilities and ethics should yearbook staff follow?

DESIGN & THEME

WHO ARE YOU?

Break into teams of four or five and answer the following questions to help define you and your school.

Name of school:

Year school opened:

City:

First year of yearbook:

Name of yearbook:

School colours:

Describe your school, using as many words as you can think of, both concrete and otherwise:

Describe your student body; make sure you get all groups as well as those not on yearbook:

Describe school traditions:

Describe what's new this year:

How does your student body describe or think of your school?

What do other people say about your school?

What would you like people to say about your school?

How will your students perceive this year?

WHAT FITS US?

Come up with as many phrases or words to describe your school as you can. Perhaps your school name can be something that provides something to play with, your school's location or colours could evoke a theme. Even after a concept is chosen, continue playing with it. If your school is Ponder High School, "Ponder this" could become the phrase, but you might also come up with "Think Again" or "Something to Think About" as spin-offs or for headlines for secondary coverage.

IDEA MAPPING

Idea mapping is a process that allows you to start with a central idea and then draw related ideas that can become photo ideas or main story topic or alternative story ideas. Let's say you want to do a spread on cars. It's a totally legitimate idea since cars are a huge part of every student's life, even if a student never gets one.

Write cars in the middle of a page. Now everyone brainstorms to come up with as many ideas as possible dealing with cars.

Now what of this list works for what? What will make good photos, good stories, and good sidebars?

Obviously, several would work for the main idea. Let's say we choose "Getting a car and making it your own" for the main story topic and some of the main pictures.

DOMINANT PHOTO IDEAS:

- Someone buffing with a cloth to make the car shine with the owner is reflected in the mirror or the surface of the car.
- Someone putting something into his trunk and the bumper stickers and personalized plate are in the shot.
- A photo of someone sorting through all the stuff he keeps in his passenger seat or back seat (my car is a locker?).

OTHER SHOTS:

- A framing shot through the handle and hose of someone filling up the car.
- Soap slobbered all over.
- Getting out of the car and walking into school.
- Paying a parking attendant or any of a thousand other creative shots.
- Maybe the headline is "Taking Care of Business" and the subhead is "Having a vehicle takes time and money, students discover."

SIDEBARS:

- “How much does it cost per month to have a car?” This could be a survey or poll or it could be a way to include three students who tell their own costs.
- “Top 5 things I hate to do now that I have a car.” Could be a mug shot and quote.
- “Best ways to personalize your car.” Writer could go to a car store and find things and their costs. The possibilities are endless.

Using a Yearbook spread, identify the following reader entry points:

- Dominant element or photo
- Cut-out photo
- Large headlines
- Colour
- Initial letter
- Dropped cap
- Pulled quote
- Story subheads
- Lead-ins in bold or all-cap

BUILD-A-TEMPLATE

To help jump start the template building process, follow the 8 steps below using stock images and text. Once the spreads are completed, have the whole yearbook team vote and use the winning spread as the template base for the book.

1. Start with a column grid.
2. Place a dominant photo that is at least 2 to 2½ times the size of all other elements.
3. With a second photo, start an eyeline from which other elements can be set or hung.
4. Add 5 to 7 additional photos of varying size and shape.
5. Keep inner spacing to one pica between all elements.
6. Place headline and copy block as one rectangular element, usually in an outside corner.
7. Add captions so they touch their corresponding photos to avoid placing them between elements or more than two stacked on or by each other.
8. Make sure all exterior margins are established.

WRITING

A PICTURE IS WORTH 100 WORDS

1. Cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers that set a mood or seem to tell a story.
2. Choose two pictures and write a 100 word story that pulls the two images together.
3. Then, write a caption for each photo that relates to the story.
4. Discuss with the class the difference between the story and captions.
5. Review copies of National Geographic and review how much information you see in the captions, versus the story.

COPY PLANNER

Name: _____

Narrative Story: _____

Date: _____

Type of Narrative: _____

From Bob Baker's *Newsthinking: The Secret of Great News Writing* (Writer's Digest Books, 1981):

- Do you have enough material to produce "a clever or inspired angle"?
- Have you wisely sorted out the many elements fed to you by your memory?
- Do some elements "suddenly leap out at you"?
- Do you feel an essential unity among the story elements, a sense that "the elements truly fit together"?

If so, Baker writes, you have the makings of a "unique, creative combination of ideas". If no, "you are probably kidding yourself".

In one sentence, pitch the story to your editor. What does the character or group want? Why can't they have it now? How will they set about getting it? What obstacles will they face?

What focus, description, anecdotes, quotations, and obstacles will the narrative contain? Put a star next to the most important point.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

How will the character/group overcome obstacles and achieve their goal? What kind of resolution is there to their quest, if any?

List written and oral sources below, you should have at least three:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PHOTOGRAPHY

DON'T BE SHY... TAKE YOUR TIME

- Great photos come from patience and persistence.
- Take at least three different angles of each subject.
- Move around.
- Take a chance.
- Go to a slight angle off center, then go all the way to the extreme side. Use the light as you move to see how the light "sculpts" the subject.

Don't be afraid to "fill" your memory card as you wander around and experiment with the best way to get the shot.

FLASH

Shooting with a flash shouldn't be scary or overly-complicated but there are some basics and a little practice you can get great results.

- The basic rule of flash photography is to only use it within the recommended distance outlined in your camera's user manual (most flashes are good between 6-10 feet).
- The most dramatic way to demonstrate the value of flash is outside. Take a picture with the sun behind your subject. Take one "regular" photo. Take the next photo using flash. You'll be amazed at the difference.
- Mix up the variety – use strong natural light as a complement to the flash. Try using natural light as your "second" light source.
- Try a few shots at night using a slow shutter speed and then panning away quickly as the flash goes off. Try the same thing, but this time use a zoom lens and zoom quickly in or out as the flash goes off.

WRITE

Encourage your photographers to write a caption for each photo soon after taking the picture. Each caption should be two sentences long. The first sentence describes the photo in words, usually using present tense. It includes the "5Ws and an H" (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How). If the picture was missing, would you have a good understanding of what was happening in the photo from the first sentence?

The second sentence tells the reader something that cannot be known by looking at the photo. This could be a quote from someone who is pictured, a final score, or something interesting the reader should know.

POSERS

Avoid poser shots. No faces in the camera, no pals standing together flashing peace signs at you – none of that. If you're trying to get a shot and the subject knows you're there, encourage them to go on doing what they were doing, then wait for your natural moment. If they start grinning and looking silly, you are back to posed photos, so try somebody else in the viewfinder.