



WRITING:

TELL ME A STORY

Walsworth yearbooks

Yearbook
SUITE

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WRITING:

TELL ME A STORY

STUDENT WORKBOOK

WRITING: TELL ME A STORY

So why do we even bother to write yearbook copy? I mean, seriously... nobody likes to read and yearbook staff members claim they don't like to write, so why go to the trouble?

Let's start with why we produce yearbooks – and why people buy them.

A yearbook captures memories. It is the sentimental version of a bank vault where we store the important events, the touching memories, those defining moments that give meaning and life to a year.

The yearbook is a time machine that allows readers to remember what it was to be in high school, to be a teen.

Yearbooks without stories have a hard time capturing defining moments or reminding readers who they were and how life has changed. To do this, you need to write stories that are captivating and personal. Once you learn the process for researching, writing and rewriting, you can write those engrossing stories for your yearbook.



Lesson 1

Getting Started

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

How to find a good story

How to brainstorm for a story

We all love a good story. Whether the story begins with “once upon a time...,” “did you hear...?” or “OMG!” we’ve been listening to and telling stories all of our lives. Telling stories isn’t difficult if you stop to think about why you have always loved a good story.

So how do you find a good story?

Focus on people, not events.

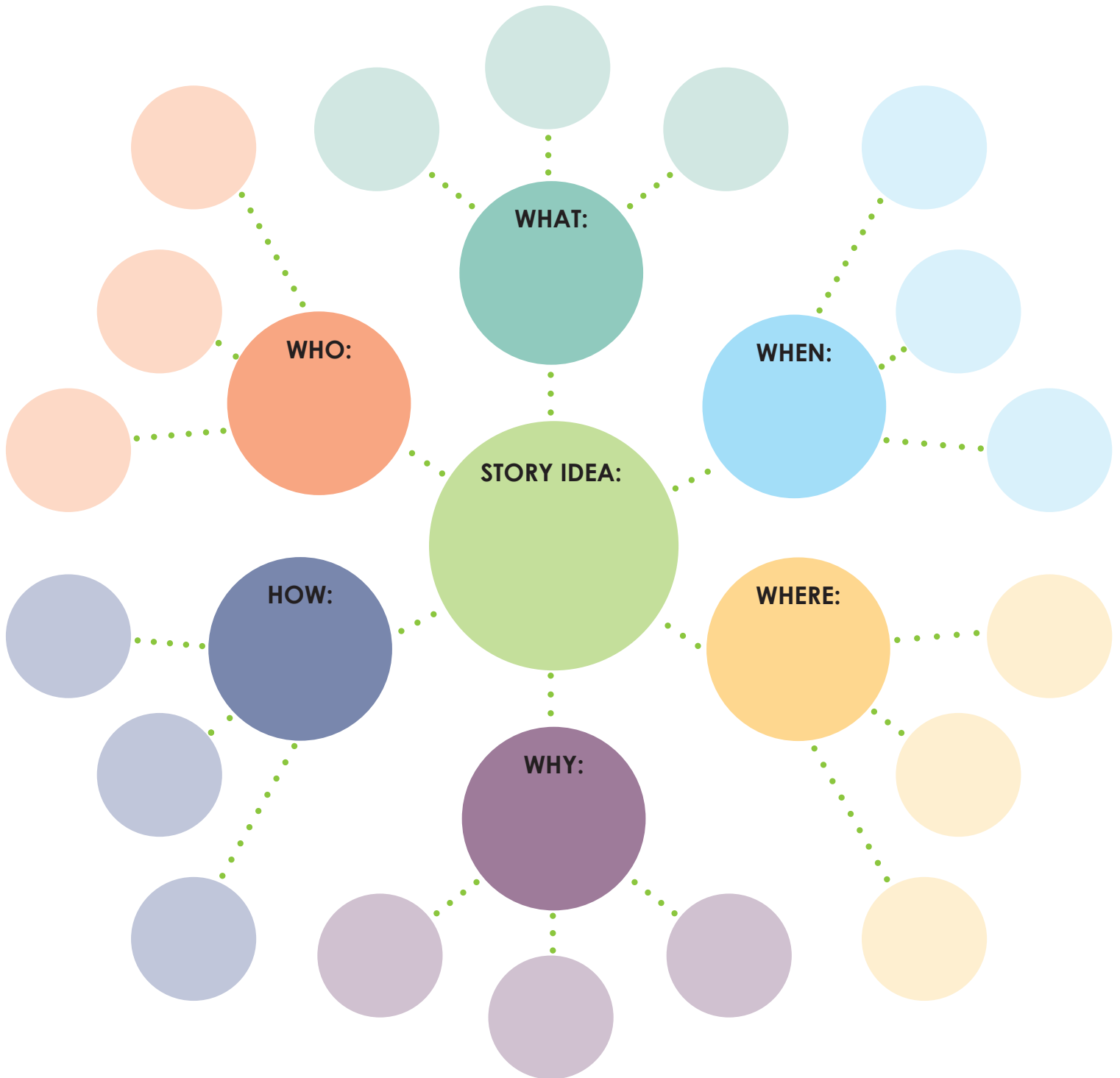
Think about your favorite childhood stories. The plotline wasn’t the story of Hogwarts, but of Harry Potter and his friends. Story assignments are generally given in terms of what club, event or sport will be covered. Writing about the talent show or Key Club or English classes is a recipe for a dull story. Focus the story on a person or on a few people.

Narrow your coverage to a compelling moment that tells the story of the year.

Rather than writing a summary list of the acts that performed in the talent show and offering a few words about each, pick a moment that tells the story of what made this year’s talent show different. Use photos, captions and sidebar coverage to tell the rest of the story.

BRAINSTORMING WEB

To help you determine what you know and what you want to know about a topic, complete a brainstorming web. Begin with a general story topic at the center and who, what, when, where, why and how in the six secondary boxes. Fill in the details of what you know and then the last circles can be filled with questions and information you need to find.



VOCABULARY

Accuracy Freedom from mistake or error

Angle The approach to a story taken by a writer; a more specific angle results in a better story

AP Style A widely accepted style and usage guide in journalism; short for Associated Press Stylebook

Attribution Identifying the speaker of a quote by full name and other information such as year in school

Bias Emphasis on a particular view that results in representing some information in an unfair or inaccurate manner

Cliché A phrase that has been used so often that it is no longer effective

Lead Beginning or introduction to an article; should grab the reader's attention and give the story direction, setting the tone

Objectivity Presentation of information based on facts rather than on feelings or opinions

Paraphrase Presenting the information received from a source without using their exact words

Quote The exact words of a source, presented within quotation marks

Redundancy A word or phrase that is repeated and is therefore unnecessary; also using more words than needed to present information

Source A person who provides information for a story

Transition Words or phrases that help a story move smoothly from one point to the next

NOTES!

Lesson 2

Research

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

How to begin researching for a story

That research for a yearbook story will involve interviewing, observation and searching for local written sources including the school and local newspaper and previous yearbooks

To become familiar with terms regarding yearbook writing

Now that you have an idea of the information you already know, as well as questions you need answered, you are ready to begin research.

Writing a journalistic story involves more than sitting at a computer and putting your ideas together. The most important part of preparing to write a good story is personally attending all events that relate to your topic. Observe and take notes for later use.

If the assignment is the talent show, you will need to determine when tryouts will occur, when and how the results will be announced, the date of the show and then plan to be at each. At each stage of the tryout and performance of the talent show, you will be both interviewing and observing (see the unit, *The Art of the Interview*, for more information on this topic).

All of this may seem obvious, but it is easy to overlook story ideas and angles unless you have a process to follow. You must be curious and interested in getting a compelling story. Although you will never directly show up in the story as the writer, you must be there observing and learning about the topic at hand. You must be able to tell the reader not only what happened, but what it felt like to be there. Saul Pett, who won a Pulitzer Prize for feature writing, once said, "A story without the writer in it is as meaningless as a rimless zero." That's good advice and good writing.



INFORMATION GATHERING

Start by reading the example stories on the next few pages. Then gather information about the person or topic you will be writing about by getting out and observing. You won't know what details you are looking for until you determine the angle of the story, so pay attention. Look for all kinds of details.

Regardless of what type of story you are covering, take a significant amount of time to observe: several games, four to five different homecoming invitations, several class periods or several hours (perhaps on a couple of occasions). Plan to take notes on what you see, the mood and the smells (if applicable).

In addition, look for stories in the school or local newspaper that will provide additional information you might be able to use.



“TURNED INTO TALENT”

Usually a night time affair, the annual talent show became an afternoon event attracting 11 acts and a large crowd

by Tia Gadison
2013 Hoofbeats – Burges High School

She glanced up at the clock. The 40-minute show was running overtime. With two acts left, anxiety replaced calmness.

‘We’re not going to make it,’ senior emcee Katherine Fuentes thought to herself. Backstage, the decision had to be made whether to let the show go on or cut the number of acts left to perform.

“The 3:50 bell rang so people were leaving,” Fuentes said. “I looked out from behind the curtain, and there was still a good crowd. I thought the last two acts would sing without an audience, but luckily that wasn’t the case.”

Going nowhere, special guest judges Bill and Melissa Kerr of Sunny 99.9 and Pattie Diaz from Power 102 were impressed.

“There was a rumor going around that Burges had the best talent, so we wanted to see for ourselves,” Bill Kerr said. “The talent show was better than we thought it’d be.”

Good scene setting lead. Good observation.

Quote has been used to follow up on scene-setting detail presented in the previous paragraph.

Quote does a nice job of explaining the problem that the emcee was facing. Note that the story focuses on a person, rather than just on the event.

ACTIVITY (CONT.)

Singing "If This Was A Movie," by Taylor Swift, senior Melissa Briseño knew she would not win. That's because she won the previous year, and the rules state she could not win two consecutive years.

"Some of my friends had to catch a bus, and others had to get to ROTC practice," Briseño said. "Words could not describe my feeling when I finished. My friends who stayed, stood up and cheered. It made the moment that much better."

The event, which raised \$1,300 for Amici's trip to New York, attracted junior Antonio Alcantar, who admitted using the occasion to get out of eighth period.

"It was actually a good show," Alcantar said. "I was glad I went. I was surprised by all of the talent. It was better than being in class, and I appreciated the entertainment."

Nice way of working in important information/rules.

Quote gives the reader a sense of how important it is to the performers to have an audience that reacts to the performance. This probably represents a feeling that most of the performers would echo, allowing Briseño to speak for all of them.

Good statistical info. Good to explain how the money will be used.

Good to get a quote from the student audience.

She had kept a smile through it all — through the prolonged hospital visits, through the treatments that seems endless. Allyson Woodbury's hope was

"INFINITE"

*by Kelly Rushing
2006 Lair – Shawnee Mission Northwest High School*

All that was left of her blonde hair hung out from her Adidas baseball cap. Her pink fleece blanket and favorite pillow lay next to her on the couch. A navy sports bag sat by the stairs, open, revealing folded T-shirts. For the first time in eight days, Allyson Woodbury, junior, sat on her couch at home, instead of in a hospital room at KU Medical Center.

"I was diagnosed this time on August 12," Allyson said. "The first time was a lot harder because this time we knew there was a chance it could come back." She adjusted the hat on her nearly bald scalp. A yellow Livestrong bracelet hung loosely around her wrist.

"It was scary. I didn't know what they would do since they already did chemo the first time," Allyson said.

Scene-setting lead. Note the attention to detail: Adidas baseball cap, pink fleece blanket.

Quote brings both the person and the topic to the forefront. The reference to the yellow Livestrong bracelet hints to the reader that Allyson suffers from cancer. Good example of 'show, don't tell.'

ACTIVITY (CONT.)

She was first diagnosed February 21, 2003, when the doctors found a tumor in the tibia of her left leg. That tumor was removed, and Allyson was declared cancer-free 20 months later. Then, in August, they found it again. This time the cancer had spread throughout her body.

With this paragraph, the story begins to spell out the timeline, the progress of Allyson's cancer.

"Now it's in both femurs, my clavicle, my spine, ribs, bone marrow and my pelvis," Allyson said. She counted them off on her pale, thin fingers.

Good use of detail gained from observation.

Allyson had to have bone marrow stem-cell transplants that replaced the good blood cells lost during chemo and radiation.

Simple explanation of treatment rather than a detailed scientific explanation using medical terms.

"Treatments are every three weeks, unless I get sick in between. I have one more chemo, then a transplant, then radiation, and then another transplant."

Note that quotes are sprinkled liberally throughout the story. The writer allows Allyson to tell her own story.

She has been on the operating table 14 times since her diagnosis, eight since July.

"They did surgery on my hip and three calf replacements." She pulled her left jean pant leg up, exposing a tan wrap from her ankle to her calf.

"One time my leg opened up... I have a metal plate in my calf and I could read the serial number on the plate it was open so far. They had to close that up," Allyson said. Her constant smile exposed teeth, yellow from chemo. She pushed buttons on her small, portable IV as she spoke.

More good use of observational detail.

"I'm hooked up to this every night," Allyson said, pulling a clear, empty fluid sack out from behind the couch. A tangled matching clear tube hung from it. "I have a permanent IV. They feed the tube into you; it goes into the main artery." She searched her chest for the scar and pulled her baggy KU T-shirt back to uncover the tubes above her belt, "which is nice." She continued as she laughed, "No needles."

Allyson's mom, Pat, has been by her side from the beginning.

Simple transition introduces the mother.

"Every day she's there [at the hospital], I am," Mrs. Woodbury said. Almost every hospital visit was unplanned, but they kept a bag packed and ready every day.

"You never know when you'll get a fever or get sick or dehydrated, because when you're on chemo and you're sick,

ACTIVITY (CONT.)

“INFINITE” CONT.

you can't eat or drink," Allyson said. She brought the same things with her to the hospital that lay around her on the couch — her blanket, pillow and laptop.

"The whole hospital is wireless now, so I'm on the internet a lot," Allyson said, patting her laptop. The hospital has become a second home to the Woodburys, sometimes a first home.

"She's in as much as out," Mrs. Woodbury said. She tried to count how often Allyson had been at home since August. "She probably hasn't been home more than eight days at a time. We are lucky that we like all the people there. They're good to her."

Allyson is rarely alone. She is normally surrounded by her mom, her friends or her nurses.

"There's usually someone here every day. You get really close with the nurses because you're with them all day," Allyson said. But home will always have something that the hospital never will.

"I miss sleeping through the night. They wake you up all the time to take your blood pressure and temperature," Allyson said.

Allyson's full-body radiation was scheduled for December. After the next treatments, the doctors, Allyson and her parents hoped to kill all of the cancer cells and beat it for the last time. Allyson's hope was infinite.

"She handles it better than I do. Both of us have our good and bad days, but she's very optimistic," Mrs. Woodbury said. "If she beat it once, she can beat it again."

**Allyson Woodbury was crowned the Homecoming queen the following fall and died a few months later.*

Initially, I thought this paragraph could be deleted, but the discussion of the internet helps the writer make it clear that this girl has been in the hospital so much that it is like home to her.

Quote from Allyson's mom brings the story to an obvious and clear close. It also does a nice job of reminding the reader of the headline.

NOTES!

Lesson 2
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate an understanding of the importance of researching and gathering information from various sources before writing. I can...
 - a. use my journalistic curiosity to discover story-telling details
 - b. attend events that will provide important information and interviews for my story
 - c. observe my surroundings so that I can convey feeling, emotion and sensory detail in my writing
- 2.0 I understand the importance of gathering information before writing, but I don't understand what kind of information I need to acquire.
- 1.0 I don't understand the importance of gathering information before writing.

Lesson 3

The Writing Process

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

What to look for in a good story angle

How to write a lead

Once you have received a story assignment, it's time to get moving. The writing process provides you with a framework of steps to complete on the journey to a fabulous story. Before beginning to write, make sure you know the deadline for your first draft. Set mini-deadlines for yourself by working backwards from your deadline to allow plenty of time to complete this process.

Find an angle.

After organizing the notes, facts, observations, quotations and details you have gathered, determine a central theme that will provide both focus and direction for your story. Remember that the story should focus on human interest and emotion. It should not be merely a list of facts or events. Choose an angle that allows you to capture the story of the year by combining anecdotes and quotes to recreate specific moments. You can change the angle later in the writing process if the initial angle proves unworkable.

Create an informal outline.

In *The Art of the Interview* unit, you were taught to mark up your notes to highlight the best quotes and most relevant details. Now, you will build on that process. Go back through all of your interview and observation notes. Make sure you have copies of stories written by the school newspaper related to your topic (remember you can't use the quotes from the newspaper unless you attribute them).

Find quotes and details you have marked in your notes for use and number them in the order you intend to use them. If you do this carefully, you can essentially write your story by providing additional information and transitions between these elements to construct the story.

Write the lead.

Try beginning the story with a **scene-setting lead**, which verbally paints a picture of a person or place. Immediately take the reader into the story. Even if the reader is not familiar with the scene you are depicting or the person you are describing, this type of detail tends to draw him or her to the story.

- > In newswriting, a lead consists of one paragraph of fewer than 25 words. In feature writing, which is more closely related to the type of stories that appear in yearbooks, the lead often is presented in two to three short paragraphs.
- > Paragraphs are kept short in all forms of journalism because of the way stories are presented: in relatively narrow columns. Columns, even those wide by journalistic standards, can cause a paragraph of only two sentences to appear complex and unappealing.

EXAMPLE:

The screams of children echoed through the house, and his ears began to ring. No matter what he did, the children wouldn't calm down. With three or more hours of babysitting to go, freshman Matthew Brignoni took a deep breath and continued his efforts to take care of the kids.

– The Legend, Boone High School, Brittany Hope

Or try a **storytelling lead**, one that uses the story of a particular person to demonstrate the experience of many people as another compelling way to begin a story. In the interview, questions like “tell me about” Or “So what happened when...” tend to elicit this type of information.

EXAMPLE:

It's Friday after school, and all seven members of the drumline cram into Josephine Barajas' car. They make it to her house and form a beeline to the fridge in search of leftovers — hamburgers, cereal, quesadillas. Then junior Aaron Rodarte looks at the time and drops his fork.

“We're going to be late,” he announces to the group.

Being 40 minutes late was about par, Rodarte said. They crammed back inside the car, arrived to the parking lot and hurried inside. Once inside the band room, they headed straight to the drum closets to set up before changing into their uniforms.

– Hoofbeats, Burges High School, Tia Gadison

The scene-setting lead and the storytelling lead differ only slightly. They draw the reader directly into the story by providing compelling details. The storytelling lead is generally longer (3-4 paragraphs) and includes a quote. The scene-setting lead tends to focus on visual and auditory details and is generally 2-3 paragraphs in length.

NOTES!

Lesson 3
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate how to identify and introduce the story angle to the reader and engage them through the use of well-structured leads. I can...
 - a. determine the central idea of the story and can introduce its message through a descriptive lead
 - b. use narrative techniques to keep the story's lead concise but engaging
 - c. use descriptive words, telling details, and sensory language to create an emotional connection with the reader and engage them in the lead of the story
- 2.0 I understand how to establish a strong angle before writing, but I still struggle to write a lead that introduces the angle and engages the reader through the use of telling details and narrative techniques.
- 1.0 I don't understand how to get started on writing a story.

Lesson 4

After the Lead

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

To recognize and write a nut graf, and how to continue the story after the nut graf

The difference between active and passive voice, and the characteristics of a strong story end

The lead is followed by the nut graf (short for paragraph), which provides both transition and direction to the story.

NUT GRAF

Paired with a scene-setting or anecdotal lead, the nut graf tells the reader what the story is about and offers background information as needed for clarity. It can be one paragraph or several. The nut graf may or may not include a quotation. Be sure the nut graf does not tell so much that the reader has no reason to continue reading.

According to journalism researchers at The Poynter Institute, the nut graf has several purposes:

- > It justifies the story by telling readers why they should care.
- > It provides a transition from the lead and explains the lead and its connection to the rest of the story.
- > It often includes supporting material that helps readers see why the story is important.

Let's go back to one of the lead examples from the previous lesson and look at more of the story.

EXAMPLE:

The screams of children echoed through the house, and his ears began to ring. No matter what he did, the children wouldn't calm down. With three more hours of babysitting to go, freshman Matthew Brignoni took a deep breath and continued his efforts to take care of kids.

- *Babysitting was Brignoni's only source of money during the school year, and he needed the \$10 an hour to pay his bills.*

- This is the nut graf. The rest of the story explains why Matthew needs to earn money and then the story widens out to talk about other students who work.

FIND THE NUT GRAF

Read each of the following examples. Underline the nut graf.

1. *Huddled near the flagpole at 7:09 a.m., he grasped a stranger's hand and bowed his head to pray.*

For sophomore Peyton Kane, Christianity affected every aspect of his life in a positive and beneficial way.

Kane became interested in Christianity because of his parents, but as he got older, his friends got him involved in a youth group, Remix, held on Wednesdays at his church, Fellowship Orlando.

2. *"We beg to differ. We beg to differ!"*

Dean of students Greg Wojczynski led the cheer in response to a referee's call during the game against main rival Aquinas Jan. 3.

At the end of quarters and during timeouts, the entire student section of bleachers rocked back and forth in the motion of rowing a boat and Wojczynski was at the heart of all that spirit.

3. *The building reeked with the unmistakable smell of chlorine. Swimmers yelled in the echoing area and still were only barely audible to their teammates.*

The Cougars stood in their "crash zone," where each team had their bags and other gear stashed, directly across from the warm-up pool.

"The atmosphere was hectic and crowded," senior Aaron Bullard said. "It was a little nerve-racking, but that's what made it so exciting."

This was the most important meet of the year: state.

Competing in the meet would not be an easy task, but all year the team had made it a goal to overcome the obstacles that challenged them.



BODY OF THE STORY

The rest of the story will unfold naturally as you weave details and background information between quotations using the quote-transition-quote-transition format. Generally, yearbook stories will be organized chronologically, but stories that lack a clear timeline will follow a logical system of organization determined by the writer. Use active not passive voice throughout. Avoid any sentence that begins with "There are...," "There was...," or "There were...," etc.



Your Name:

PASSIVE VOICE

Rewrite these sentences to "activate" the verb.

1. The candy was sold in the gym by the PTA.

2. A mess was left by the seminar class in room 11.

3. Several notes were left on the board Tuesday.

4. An anonymous letter was received by the newspaper staff.

5. The team was excited about the state tournament.

6. The event was canceled by bad weather.

7. The proposed school funding initiative will be bitterly opposed by groups that favor decreased property taxes.

8. The store was robbed by an employee.

9. The fire was caused by an oven that overheated.

10. The book had been given to Stephanie as a gift.

THE END

Work just as hard on your ending as you did on the lead. Every story must come to a complete and satisfying end. The story shouldn't just stop, it should give the reader the impression that the end has been reached.

- > Return to the scene introduced in the lead to bring the story to a close.
- > Describe the reaction of people in the story to the end of the event — the dance, the game, the play. Or show what people did at the end.
- > Find a quote that provides a natural conclusion to the story.

The best endings leave the reader with something that resonates, something to remember.



“ROOTS”

Homemade potato latkes give sophomore Bible classes a taste of Jewish traditions

by Haley Mulder, Arrowhead Christian Academy, Redlands, Calif.

Butter was burning, but no one seemed to notice. Potatoes flew in the air as Bradley Mowbray practiced juggling. Students socialized instead of listening to instructions.

Matthew Kesuma and Jacob Crocker raced to see who could shred their potatoes the fastest.

“Please don’t judge me,” Kesuma said as Crocker taught him the proper way to grate a spud.

“Be gentle,” Crocker instructed.

“I just got third degree burns!” Kesuma yelled as his hand slipped and hit the hot pan.

Making potato latkes was one of Roy Smith's favorite ways to help sophomore Bible students get a taste of Jewish culture.

It was tradition.

The potato pancakes served with sour cream allowed students to experience the Hanukkah celebration.

“I want them to see the mind-set and customs of the Jewish people,” Smith said. “In order to understand the New Testament, you have to know where it all came from. They need to realize that Jesus was a Jew.”



Excellent scene-setting lead paragraphs. Use of dialogue takes the reader directly into the classroom.

This is the nut graf. It builds on the lead and focuses the reader's attention on the topic of the story.

A bit of foreshadowing. The story later refers to “Fiddler on the Roof.” This is both an allusion to the movie and literary device that will help hold the story together.

“ROOTS” CONT.

A collection of Jewish trinkets covered Smith's shelves. A dreidel, a prayer shawl, and a bottle of Dead Sea sand were part of his lessons. Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic words appeared frequently in his lectures.

And he threw in a couple of facts to go along with it.

“Jews [always] wear hats. Did you know that? They are called ‘marmulkes.’ I have one.”

Each year, Smith devotes a week of class to watch “Fiddler on the Roof,” a film about Jewish traditions and persecution.

“I never really knew much about Jewish history,” Ariana Fuyumoro said. “I knew about the bad things that happened to the Jews, but I never understood why it happened or who they were in a spiritual sense. I loved ‘Fiddler on the Roof’ because it shows the history of Jews and their struggles. Plus, it was a musical, so it was instant love from the start.”

Smith's students sang the songs in the hallways and even during their other classes.

It was tradition.

“I want them to have the knowledge of the Jewish religion,” Smith said. “Regardless of whether you are a believer or not, the traditions of the Bible teach lessons that can be used in daily life.”

“There's a lot of detail in our lessons,” Brooke Petty said. “It's more than just notes on the board.”

Latkes, dreidels, and Jewish music bring the roots of the Bible to the sophomore class.

“There is nothing else more fulfilling than knowing and understanding the Bible,” Smith said. “Tradition explains everything.”

Quickly provides a snapshot of relevant items in the classroom as well as a quick peek at the way this teacher brings the lesson to his students.

These paragraphs provide student reaction to the lesson and the movie. The writer does an excellent job of making the reader wish he could be in this class.

Here's that allusion again.

A final reference to the allusion and to the movie brings the story to a complete and satisfying end.

NOTES!

Lesson 4
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate how to develop the angle of the story by effectively using well-chosen, relevant facts and details. I can...
 - a. properly follow the quote-transition-quote format and can vary my transition sentences to connect quotes and create cohesion in the story
 - b. use precise language and phrases to maintain an active voice throughout the story
 - c. craft a satisfying conclusion by returning to the events recorded in the lead or by using a storytelling quote that brings closure to the piece
- 2.0 I understand how the placement of an effective nut graf helps develop the story, but I still struggle to logically organize the details and quotes of the story into the proper format.
- 1.0 I don't understand how to proceed with writing a story after the lead.

Lesson 5

Improve Your Writing

Objective – In this lesson, you will learn:

To become familiar with advanced storytelling techniques

Once you've mastered the techniques of storytelling from the previous lessons, you are ready to employ advanced storytelling techniques to enhance the appeal of your story. These techniques are found both in the words of excellent writers and in the images that you have grown accustomed to viewing in a good movie or TV show. Good storytelling is good storytelling across all media. As a result, you can adapt techniques from poetry, song lyrics and cinema, as well as from other various forms of writing to improve yearbook stories.

WRITE TIGHT WITHOUT COMPROMISING CONTENT

Famous song lyrics, such as "Eleanor Rigby," and "Sittin' by the Dock of the Bay" are wonderful examples of writing tight to convey a message. To accomplish this, you should work to remove redundancy.



REMOVING REDUNDANCY

Each of the following phrases is either redundant or wordy. Rewrite each.

1. Cooperate together

.....

2. Cheaper in cost

.....

3. Filled to capacity

.....

4. Past history

.....

5. Personal opinion

.....

6. They beat him about the face and body.

.....

7. The superintendent's report was based on the true facts.

.....

8. The freshman football team played their games at 3 p.m. in the afternoon.

.....

9. Advance planning can make all the difference in the success of a school dance.

.....

10. Last of all, I would like to completely finish this exercise before I go to bed.

.....

THINK CINEMATICALY

Use the techniques of a cinematographer. Think about your favorite movie and the way the camera presents a variety of angles to tell the story. These same techniques can be used in good writing.

- > Present the overview picture... show where the story is taking place.
- > Move in closer... show people and how they interact.
- > Go for the close-up... provide small details that others may not have noticed but that add depth to the story.
- > Create slow motion by showing action or layering detail in short, choppy sentences.
- > Create the sense of fast forward by presenting action in longer sentences that utilize verb or gerund phrases.

See how it was done in this example.

After seven heartbreaking losses and one come-from-behind-win, the football team based their whole season on

“THE LAST GAME”

by Peter C. Soto III
2006 Lair – Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

Before the last game of the season, the football team didn't have many victories to cheer about. Like all the ones that preceded it, the ride to South stadium was quiet. Everyone was thinking about what this final game meant. For the seniors, it would probably be the last time they would play. For the underclassmen, it would be the first building block for the next season.

The lead sets the scene, bringing the reader into not only the physical place where the story will begin to unfold, but into the mental attitude of the team.

“Go out and hit people. It may be the last time some of you will be able to do that legally,” Coach Bob Jensen, offensive coordinator, said.

Great quote. The only reason the writer is able to get this quote is that he is on the bus with the team.

Game day routine was in full effect; board the buses; get to the stadium, go over strategy, walk the field, stretch and warm up. The same as any other game day.

This is the story of just one game, but telling the story of this game allows the writer to tell the story of the season. Since the part of the game that matters to the writer is the second half, he spends very little time talking about the first half of the game.

The first half mirrored the first halves of previous games. Leavenworth jumped out to a 21-0 lead. Mental mistakes plagued the team throughout the first half. Missed chances and bad luck played a huge factor, not to mention playing against a strong wind.

“You can have the best scheme in the world, but if it doesn't get executed between the white lines, it isn't very good,” head coach Scott Diebold said.

This quote sounds like it could have resulted from the writer's proximity and access to the team. In reality, the quote comes from an interview immediately after the game.

Back in the locker room, the seniors were in utter disbelief. It was their senior game. They had just finished taking pictures with their

parents. They were in their uniforms for the last time. They were supposed to win this game easily with all of their parents watching. The disbelief the team felt quickly turned into anger. Soon cries of “Not like last year,” “There won’t be a next year,” and “Did you guys give up?” filled the locker room. The seniors’ emotion quickly spread to the whole team and the second half did not mirror the first.

“When in doubt, pick someone out and knock them down,” Coach Jensen told the team.

A quick summary of the scene in the locker room coupled with another great quote set the scene for what will happen in the last half of the game.

The team took what Coach Jensen said to heart and everything fell into place in the opening moments of the second half. Sam Jacobson, safety, and the rest of the secondary made sure Leavenworth’s passing game slowed to a stop while Justin Pessetto, defensive lineman, and other members of the defensive line held, preventing the Pioneers from establishing their running game.

Finally, all of the things the team had been trying to do defensively clicked at just the right time. Luck was even on their side when a punt by Brandon Cox, kicker, landed out of bounds on the Leavenworth one-yard line giving the Pioneers horrible field position. With four minutes remaining in the season, the score was 16-21. A come-from-behind win was within reach, if only time held out.

The clock ticked down, second by second, as Alex Carter, quarterback, threw a 40-yard pass to Jacobson. After blowing by two defenders, Jacobson scored a touchdown to put the team up by one. The crowd of mostly senior parents went wild. Their sons were finally going to do what they had wanted them to do since the second game of the year. They were going to win. A two-point conversion and an interception later, the team had won 24-21.

Here you see an example of that cinematic effect of advanced writing techniques. The writer slows down the action and zooms in on individuals to show the team winning the game.

Signs of celebration were everywhere. Coaches gave players their best and told them how happy they were to have coached them during their high school careers.

Both players and parents were crying and embracing.

Short paragraphs spotlight quick moments.

“I love these boys,” Danny Pestock, tight end, said. Tears appeared in his eyes.

After such a long journey, the varsity players only had one request for the bus ride back home — they wanted to hang on to the feeling of victory for as long as possible.

“Hey, Mr. Bus Driver, take the long way home,” Pestock said.

We all understand that feeling of wanting to stay in a moment for as long as we possibly can. The writer captures that yearning perfectly in the next-to-last paragraph and caps it off with a quote that summarizes that desire.

BE SPECIFIC

Say what you mean. Choose verbs and adjectives that paint a specific image in the mind of the reader.

- > Strutted, not walked
- > Maroon or scarlet, not red

Provide pertinent details, but use only those details that add insight or meaning. Readers want to know the name of the dog, the type of car and the type of clothing. “Her crystal-studded Miss Me jeans” paints an entirely different picture from “her skin-tight Mossimo leggings.”

- > He walked across the stage to shake hands with the principal.
- > He limped across the stage...
- > He galloped across the stage...

All three show a person walking across the stage, but the latter two quickly paint a picture.

TAKE THE READER SOMEWHERE UNEXPECTED

In the process of your research or interviewing, it is important to learn about details that the average person has no way to know and include them in the story.

- > The cross country coach who runs every night at practice: first with his best runners and then catches up with the slowest and runs the route a second time.
- > The drama teacher who never leaves the building before 11 p.m., even when a play is not in production because she's getting ready for the tryouts for the next play.
- > The good-luck charms or pre-game rituals of your school's state champion heavyweight wrestler.
- > What it's like to have to kiss on stage.

Taking time to learn about details like these take your story from ho-hum coverage that reads just like every other story on this topic to something special, something memorable and something that people who aren't even involved in these particular stories would be interested in reading.

CHOOSE A POINT OF VIEW

Just because journalistic stories tend to be written in third person doesn't mean this is the only point of view that can be used. There are so many alternate methods of telling a story.

Consider telling the football story from the point of view of a student who rides the bench. Spend time behind the scenes at the fall play. Can you tell the story from the point of view of the lead actor and his thoughts as he gets ready to go on stage, as he prepares for an exceedingly quick costume change or as he deals with a personal struggle that allows him to play his part even more realistically? Or perhaps you can follow a freshman through the tryout process and learn what it's like to try out for the first time.

Regardless of the point of view, you will need to then choose the best way to tell the story.

- > Third person is the most common journalistic point of view but certainly not the only one.
- > Third person employs the use of he, she, it and they.
- > First person tends to make copy personal and should be used sparingly. It makes use of the pronouns "I" and "we." It is most appropriate for stories that are best told as a personal narrative by a single person.
- > Second person creates copy that is very inclusive. It is marked by the use of the pronoun "you" and is generally reserved for how-to stories or opening copy.

FIND THE AUTHENTIC VOICE

Every person you will interview has his or her own voice. It's a different way of talking, of putting words together. Be sure you retain the authentic voice of people you interview rather than changing their words to the way you would have said it. This is another part of making a story come alive and ring true.

But it's important to remember that every writer has his or her own voice as well. You would never mistake Edgar Allen Poe for Emily Dickinson or E.E. Cummings or Ernest Hemingway or the person who sits next to you during yearbook. The best stories capture these kinds of authentic voices.

SHOW, DON'T TELL

This is not an easy skill to learn. It's easier to describe the football player as tough, a teacher as fascinating or the homecoming queen's gown as beautiful, but don't do it. Observe carefully and accurately. Provide just enough detail to paint the picture and let the reader react rather than telling him your interpretation.

- > Use fewer adjectives and strong, interesting verbs.
- > Be careful that the adjectives you choose do not unwittingly signal the writer's bias.

Remember: Readers don't come to the yearbook in search of a lifeless quote or looking just for the scoreboard. They come to be reminded... to remember, to hear a story they already know the ending to.



Read the following example story to see how it utilizes the concepts discussed in this lesson.

“THE REGULARS”

They already knew what advice she was going to give them; they were there so often they had it memorized. They knew everything Cindy Alexander, school nurse, was going to say, but they still begged and whined for naps, phone calls home and passes out of class.

*by Angela Martellaro
2006 Lair – Shawnee Mission Northwest High School*

In the morning, her office was flooded with students. After the truly sick ones were sent home and the office calmed down, the fakers and the regulars began to trickle in. Some were quiet and inconspicuous, there to hide out for a while. Others stopped by to chat when they had no one else to talk to. Some came back two or three times during the day. She knew all of their names.

“What are you here for?” Cindy Alexander, nurse, asked a tall boy in a striped polo shirt.

“Can I lay down?”

“I’ll give you 10 minutes.”

Whether these students wanted to be left alone for a while or just wanted someone to listen, they were there because there was nowhere they wanted to be and nowhere else they could go.

An alarm went off, Alexander called a familiar name.

“Time’s up, gotta go back to class.”

Most of the students who visited her really were sick. They complained of common ailments — headaches, stomach aches — and she repeated the same, common sense advice all day.

“Every kid that comes in here is a teachable moment,” Alexander said. “I almost feel like having a tape record in here — this is the ‘eat your breakfast’ tape, this is the ‘drink lots of water’ tape.”

As she went to check on the students lying down in the back room, a blonde girl in a pink bomber jacket came in and flopped down in the chair next to the desk.

“I have a migraine, make me go home!” she wailed.

A boy standing idly near the door laughed and began to run through the nurse’s standard questions.

“Did you eat breakfast?” he asked in a falsetto, imitating Alexander. “Did you get

enough sleep last night?"

"It's a combination of no sleep, poor nutrition and stress," she answered.

Alexander walked back into the room.

"I have a migraine!"

"I've already diagnosed her," the boy said. He grinned. "She's going through menopause."

Alexander rolled her eyes.

"Do you want me to diagnose everyone in the room?" he asked.

"Yeah, on your way back to class," Alexander said, handing him a pass. Then she turned her attention back to the girl with the migraine. "OK, what's going on?"

"My mom made me come for first and second hour because if I didn't, I'd fail; I have too many absences.:

"Well, isn't that a clue?" Alexander asked.

"What?"

"That maybe you should stay in class more." She said it gently.

She had an unspoken understanding with the regulars — they came in when they needed to, but not too often or for too long.

"Between kids who are really sick and the ones that are questionable — that I have to send e-mails about, or follow up on, or look for..." Alexander trailed off and sighed. "I don't want them missing class time, but sometimes I think, if you needed to be out of class that much to get a smile, or some reassurance, or a mint, maybe it's OK. If this is what they need to get them through the day, then that's OK.

A short boy with glasses wandered in for the third time that day.

"Hey, what are you doing here?"

"I don't know what I'm doing here," he said.

"Me either," Alexander said.

"Guess I'll go then."

He turned and left once again.

"A lot of what I do is more psycho-social than physical," Alexander said. "You don't know what kids are coming to school with. They might say they have a headache, but it might be a heartache. Maybe their parents filed for divorce the day before or their hamster died; all kinds of traumas. You just don't know."

Your Name:

Story Topic:

STORY CHECKLIST

When you have completed your first draft of a story, write a 1-2 sentence summary of it below. This summary should make it clear what the angle of your story is.

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Headline:

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Secondary Headline:

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Sidebar Plan:

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1. Does the story match the summary provided above? Yes ___ No ___
2. Does the story focus on a specific person or persons? Yes ___ No ___
3. Have you chosen an angle that allows the story to be told in the most effective manner? Yes ___ No ___
4. Does the story provide specific details using quotes that will help the reader recall the moments described or discussed? Yes ___ No ___
5. Are at least three highly appropriate sources quoted in the story? Yes ___ No ___
6. Does one source have leadership responsibilities for the event or organization in the story? Yes ___ No ___
7. Was one source involved in the event or organization? Yes ___ No ___
8. Can one source provide a reaction quote? Yes ___ No ___
9. Do all quotes provide insight rather than facts that don't need to be quoted? Yes ___ No ___
10. Is the story lively, interesting and familiar? Yes ___ No ___
11. Does the lead draw the reader into the story? Yes ___ No ___

12. Would a reader feel compelled to keep reading? If, as you read the story, you lost interest in the story at any point, mark it..... Yes ___ No ___
13. Is the story effectively organized?..... Yes ___ No ___
14. Does it flow easily and logically from the beginning to the end?..... Yes ___ No ___
15. Have you checked to ensure the story follows AP style?..... Yes ___ No ___
16. Read the story again looking for mechanical errors as well as errors in fact..... Yes ___ No ___
17. Has the information for your sidebar been submitted?..... Yes ___ No ___

Once you have completed this form, you are ready to meet with the copy editor. Please set up a time to meet within the next two days. At the end of the meeting with the copy editor, you will have 48 hours to make changes/corrections on your story (unless you and the copy editor negotiate a different deadline).



RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate how to develop and strengthen writing by applying advanced storytelling techniques throughout copy. I can...
- a. revise, edit and rewrite the story to remove redundancy
 - b. use precise language, including strong verbs and adjectives, to create specific, concise copy
 - c. use various points of view in copy-writing when appropriate for the content of the story
 - d. use telling details, sensory language and cinematic techniques to create vivid pictures of the experience, event, setting and/or characters
- I can establish an authentic voice that highlights the unexpected details of the story in a creative way while maintaining an objective tone throughout.
- 2.0 I understand the importance of revising the story and removing redundancy from copy, but I still struggle to apply more advanced story-telling techniques.
- 1.0 I understand how to write a basic story that follows the proper format, but I don't understand the techniques required to refine the story into a publishable piece.

Lesson 6

The Rest of the Story

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

The criteria for information that could be included in a sidebar

The various types of sidebars that might be included in a yearbook

As readers increasingly demand information presented in a visual manner, yearbooks must adapt. Sidebars allow yearbook staffs to combine design, graphics and words to present information in a visually interesting way.

A sidebar is a small feature story that complements the main story on a spread. Use sidebars to record details and free up space for feature coverage, provide team and player stats, or to feature mini profiles about interesting people involved in clubs and activities as well as a host other information that will add to the coverage of the year. It should either cover important information that will complete the coverage or provide interesting “insider” information that goes beyond the expected coverage.

Consider these criteria as you consider the types of information that would be appropriate for a sidebar.

- > A sidebar should present interesting and informative facts and short stories that the reader wants to know.
- > Information in a sidebar should be presented in a visually compelling and easily digested manner.
- > Takes Goldilocks' advice: the length of an infographic must be “just right.” Not so long that it's overwhelming, not so short that it isn't worth the reader's attention.
- > Be sure to provide appropriate attribution that either explains how the information was gathered or cites the source of the information.
- > The design of all types of infographics should coordinate with and further the graphic theme using the same fonts. However, to tie the sidebar to the spread it appears on, its color palette should echo or coordinate with the palette of the spread.
- > Various types of infographics should have titles that spin off of the theme phrase, similar to section titles.
- > If you can do an Internet search and find the information included in your sidebar, it isn't sidebar material.

SIDEBAR EXAMPLES

BY THE NUMBERS

KNOW the FACTS

- 7 DAYS** water filters to families in need
- 25** baby care supply kits to mothers in need
- 1,600** vegetables planted in new community gardens
- 200** stalks of bamboo carried up the mountain

After helping a family install a water filter in their home, junior Abby Zimmerman and senior Caitlin Beatty take a photo with their family. Three members of Interact Club participated in a variety of service projects throughout the school year. The students were so grateful for the opportunity that they could tell you about it.

BAR GRAPH/ CIRCLE GRAPH

NORTHWEST STUDENT POLITICS SURVEY RESULTS

Issue	Percentage
Issue 1	50%
Issue 2	45%
Issue 3	55%
Issue 4	60%
Issue 5	70%
Issue 6	80%
Issue 7	68%
Issue 8	44%
Issue 9	19%
Issue 10	21%
Issue 11	30%

“WE KNOW”

Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

Shawnee, Kan.

2013 Lair

FAST FACTS

"I've been bugging people about it since I started working here in 2006," Stigge said. "A school in Kansas made to have a class on the weather."

The class covered seven units on atmospheric radiation, structure and optics. It also addressed cloud formation, precipitation, major storms and how they form.

"Google and the Internet make [the weather] right there for us to see," Stigge said. "We can see forecasts but we don't know how they are made. We don't know that you can do a basic forecast just by looking outside at the types of clouds. I'm surprised we don't go outside to look at the weather anymore."

NOW YOU KNOW

The purpose of the photo project in Justin Stigge's Meteorology class was to get students outside, looking at the sky and understanding what they were seeing. The project was presented in a PowerPoint.

PERENA
Clouds are formed by the difference of light scattering. They are made of tiny water droplets and dust particles. They are made of tiny water droplets and dust particles.

PERENA
When clouds are made of tiny water droplets and dust particles, they are made of tiny water droplets and dust particles.

PERENA
Composites are formed by the difference of light scattering. They are made of tiny water droplets and dust particles.

HOW-TO

NOW you KNOW

HOW TO GANGNAM STYLE:

1. OPEN YOUR LEGS WIDE AND BEND YOUR KNEES SLIGHTLY. STEP LEFT, THEN RIGHT, THEN LEFT-LEFT QUICKLY. ADD BOUNCE TO YOUR STEP. NOW DO THE SAME THING WITH YOUR RIGHT LEG. STEP RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT-RIGHT.
2. PUT YOUR ARMS IN FRONT OF YOU LIKE YOU'RE RIDING A HORSE, BUT LIFT YOUR ARMS A LITTLE BIT UNDER YOUR CHEST.
3. PUT ONE ARM ON YOUR HIP AND THE OTHER ONE IN THE AIR LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO LASSO SOMETHING.
4. PUT THE FOOTWORK WITH THE ARMS.

Photo by [unreadable]

“WE KNOW”⁹⁹

Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

Shawnee, Kan.

2013 Lair

QUOTE COLLECTION

Enter a hashtag or keyword

FIRST FOOTBALL GAME TWEETS

ANDREW CHASE JENSEN
You bring the rain we'll bring the thunder #NWFOOTBALLBABY!!

ANDREW JIM WICKSTEAD
Thanks to all the fans that came out last night! #WREHERREHEHEHEHE

ALANNE PELLE SHINEY
Football is good... but football in the rain is better.

WYNDONIS MARIE PROSSER
This year's school spirit>>> last year's school spirit #steppedup #proud

ANDREW COLIN WONG
Best game I've ever been to or seen in Northwest history. Great game!! football team along with highly dedicated fans #nduh #seniors

MAP

OF venture

KARIN MASENTHIN

KATHY TARBUTTON

SUSANNE KISSANE

TIMELINE

KNOW

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

THE LAST

THINK OF A SIDEBAR

List the types of sidebar coverage you think would add interesting coverage to the story you are working on for this unit.

Story topic:

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Sidebar coverage:

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Lesson 6
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!

3.0 I can demonstrate an ability to further a story by identifying information and content appropriate for a sidebar. I can...

- a. use precise language and vocabulary to create specific, concise copy
- b. use theme-related graphic elements, fonts and designs to create a sidebar that reinforces the visual message of the book
- c. gather relevant information from a variety of sources to provide the reader with "insider" information that will either complete or expand upon the expected coverage of the year

I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate for a sidebar and includes attribution and source information.

2.0 I understand what a sidebar is and their purpose in yearbooks, but I don't understand how to create content that is appropriate for a sidebar.

1.0 I don't understand what a sidebar is or their purpose in yearbooks.

Lesson 7

Theme Copy

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

Why theme copy is difficult to write

The steps needed to write theme copy

Sometimes it feels like theme copy is one part excellent word choice, one part brilliant writing, one part inspired theme, three parts magic and two parts total luck.

That's because theme copy is the toughest copy in the yearbook to write. Why?

- > It's the first public airing of your theme. Get it right and everyone loves and identifies with it. Mess it up and nobody likes your theme or even understands it.
- > Theme copy forces you to take an abstract idea that you came up with over the summer and apply concrete examples from the year that is now unfolding to make it relevant, to bring it to life. Taking the abstract and making it concrete can be a serious challenge.
- > Finally, it needs to sound like anyone in your school could have written it. It needs to have a universal teenage voice that expresses the experiences and thoughts of the people who attend your school.

START WITH A GREAT THEME

To write great theme copy, you need to have a great theme. Something that is relevant and appealing to your student body. Something current. For more information on generating a great theme, see the *Finding Your Theme* unit.

GATHER EVIDENCE

At its most basic, theme copy is nothing more than a proof statement, an argument proving that the theme you selected has a direct relationship, a connection to the year it describes. What events have occurred since you selected the theme that validates the theme statement? What conversations, what moments in class, in the hall, or during a game seem to go with the theme? These all are the evidence that proves the theme you selected continues to be appropriate for the year you are covering.

VOICE

The voice you are searching for isn't the voice of a single person, but rather a chorus that sounds like your student body. Consider finding your last five yearbooks. Read the opening copy from each. Then have a forensics student read them aloud expressively. If you have

always had unsatisfying theme copy, look for books from other schools with outstanding theme copy. Read it in the same way. Although there will be some differences from school to school, the predominant tone and voice in any school's theme copy is that of a young person, of someone your age. Although you know what that sounds like, it's sometimes difficult to understand how that translates to theme copy until you hear it in someone else's book.

CREATING THEME COPY

At this point, there's no best way to write theme copy. There's only the way that works best this year, for your staff. This is the part where a clear understanding of your theme, preparation, luck and magic really do come together.

- > **Option 1:** One person takes all this information and creates the theme copy. This can be highly effective, but also creates ownership and makes it difficult to edit. With anything less than a crystal clear understanding of the theme, the writer will struggle to explain the theme.
- > **Option 2:** With a strong writer's hands on the keyboard, a group of 2-4 students takes the information and writes the theme copy together. This generally takes longer and requires a group of students who trust each other. It does, however, tend to create copy that is more universal and the group generally accepts edits more easily.
- > **Option 3:** Rather than one person or a small group of people writing the theme copy, several people each write a chunk of the theme copy. Generally, a chunk is limited to particular area of the theme or particular topic. Once each person has written their chunk, one writer will knit the chunks together into a cohesive whole. If each person understands the theme well, this can be a highly effective and efficient method of writing theme copy. The major difficulty will be in making sure individual voices are not apparent.

REDUCE BY HALF

Once you have theme copy that explains the theme and provides concrete evidence of the ways the theme applies to your school this year, you probably need to work to cut it by nearly half of its length. Look for ways to say the same thing in fewer words. Search for unnecessary details and delete them. When describing an event that occurred, we often include more information than is needed. Most of your cuts will come from this process, but expect to realize that entire paragraphs or ideas will need to be removed to improve your theme copy.

AND YOU'RE DONE...

Good theme copy resonates with those who read it, even if they don't go to your school. High school students should see themselves or people like themselves in your theme copy. High school graduates of any age recognize themselves at that age in your copy. Good theme copy connects to people. It creates a physical and emotional reaction. It has heart. This is one of the magical parts of a yearbook. Don't stop editing, cutting, rewriting, rethinking, reshaping it until it's perfect. And when you think it's perfect, put it away for two weeks, then read it, edit it, reshape it again.

Here is an example of outstanding, intriguing theme copy.

“WHY NOT?”

Arrowhead Christian Academy
2013 Wings

This is a weird book. We'll tell you that up front. We've documented the moments that left you **scratching your head**, wondering what the heck was going on. And most of the time, there really isn't an explanation.

But hey, we live in a **weird world**. "Gangnam Style" became the most-watched YouTube video, breaking one billion views in December. The Harlem Shake was a cultural phenomenon, and soon the famous horse mask even showed up in your pre-calc class.

"Why not" moments are what make up the inside jokes. The memories. The nonsensical hashtags on your Instagram photos.

They are the instances you'll write about in your friends' yearbooks. The little bursts of life that happen just for the fun of it. The **random acts of stupidity** that make you smile when you think about them later.

Midnight IHOP excursions. Silly-stringing your friends on their birthdays. Playing on playgrounds even though you're old enough to drive.

The things you do because you're young. Or maybe because you're bored. But ultimately **because you can**.

Yeah, this is a weird book.

But why not?

You've only read five words and already you're hooked. We both know that you are going to keep reading.

Every high school student who reads this recognizes himself in this first paragraph. This isn't just about the students at ACA, this paragraph describes life as a teen. The voice is that of a friend who is talking directly to you. And you will continue to hear that very consistent voice throughout the theme copy.

Note the use of specific, cultural details that tie this book and this theme to 2013.

More specific, cultural details that tie the book and theme to a specific moment in time.

Details unique to this school... IHOP, silly-string, playgrounds. It's not that these details could only be from this school, it's that the student body of ACA will recognize itself in these details. That's important and it's this ability to hold up a mirror to your student body and allow them to see themselves that makes theme copy come alive.

Tie back to the very beginning of the copy. You can tell that the story is almost over.

And here's the theme. You've read the whole thing. Even if you can't put their theme specifically into words, you have a sense of it, an idea of what to expect in this book... a light hearted approach to life as a teen, as a student at Arrowhead Christian Academy.



Your Name:

WRITING THEME COPY

Trying to determine which theme possibility is the best? Start writing your theme copy using the steps outlined in this lesson. If you are doing this prior to the beginning of the school year, use the details and specifics from the previous year to make your theme specific to your school.

Before you begin, take time to agree on whether your opening copy will be written in first, second or third person. Each has its advantages (see the Point of View section earlier in this unit). If the staff can't agree, each person should write it in the way that seems more comfortable to them. This may help you decide which voice is most appropriate for your particular theme.

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Handwriting practice area consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

NOTES!

Lesson 7 SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!

3.0 I can demonstrate how to craft engaging theme copy that creates an emotional connection with readers and effectively communicates the story of the year. I can...

- a. develop theme copy through the use of telling details and significant and relevant facts that build on one another to create a coherent whole
- b. establish a point of view and voice that connects with readers and engages them in the copy
- c. research and gather relevant information from a variety of sources that will develop and prove the theme's relationship to the year it describes
- d. work with peers to apply different approaches to writing theme copy (individually, small groups, or large groups) in order to construct a focused message

I can produce concise, clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style reflect the message of the theme.

2.0 I have a relevant theme and I understand the voice theme copy should have, but I don't know how to begin creating strong, relatable theme copy that effectively tells the story of the year.

1.0 I can write a traditional story, but I don't understand how to translate those skills to writing theme copy.

Lesson 8

Title Page

Objective – In this lesson, you will learn:

The function of a title page and the information that should be included on it

The title page is one of several pages where the theme is carried out through design, but written aspects of this page are also important. As the very first page of the book, it deserves special attention.

Photography that complements the theme and focuses on people should be the focus of the page and must be accompanied by a strong, storytelling caption (see the Captions/Headlines unit for lessons on caption writing). The next most important component of the title page is a presentation of the theme statement. Finally, some information just has to appear on the title page. Certainly, the photo and theme presentation should attract more attention, but the following information should be provided in a visually pleasing but undemanding manner:

- > Name of the book
- > Volume number
- > School name
- > Street address
- > City, state and ZIP code
- > School telephone
- > School website or a website that supplements the book
- > Student enrollment



Inclusion of the name of the principal has become popular in recent years and some staffs even include theme-related statistics. You might even choose to start theme copy on the title page.

2013 *Aftermath* Palm Harbor University High School

The staff worked to keep the title page uncluttered while still including every necessary element. Placing the required information in the lower right corner and the theme logo in the upper right corner allows the photo to dominate the page. Note that a very detailed caption which begins the theme explanation appears opposite the photo on the back of the right endsheet.

Your Name: _____

WRITE THE TITLE PAGE COPY

Reviewing the list in this lesson, write the copy that should appear on the title page of the yearbook for your school.

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Lesson 8
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!

- 3.0 I can demonstrate an understanding of the content that is appropriate for a title page. I can...
 - a. produce concise, clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style reflect the message of the theme and are appropriate for the task
 - b. gather the relevant information for the title page and can present this information in a visually-pleasing manner
 - c. construct a strong, storytelling caption that complements the theme

- 2.0 I understand what a title page is and its purpose, but I am still unsure of the content that should be included.

- 1.0 I don't know what a title page is or its purpose in a yearbook.

Lesson 9

Table of Contents

Objective – In this lesson, you will learn:

The possible placements of the table of contents and the information that should be included in the table of contents

The table of contents needs not be simply a reader service, presented in a dull but functional manner. Today's tables of contents are used to develop the theme both visually and through the words chosen to represent the various sections of the book (see the *Finding Your Theme* unit for more information on spin-off phrases).

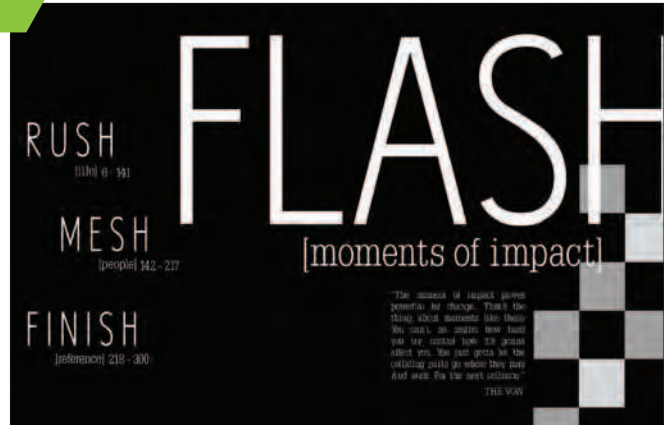
The table of contents can appear in any of a number of places. The most popular placement is on the endsheets. Some staffs have placed a general table of contents on the endsheet and introduced a more specific one on each division page. Books that can't print on endsheets could include the table of contents on the title page or perhaps could design it as a module on one of the opening spreads.

A table of contents should indicate the page on which each section begins. If the staff chooses to use spin-off phrases for each section, the table of contents also needs to provide the traditional name of the section. For example, if the theme is "The Power of One" and the spin-off theme is "The Power of Competition" for sports, both should be included in the table of contents.

Chronological books face a slightly different challenge in that their books are generally divided by seasons or months, but often include content from each of the traditional sections in each division. As a result, noting where the section for October begins does not help the reader understand where to look for coverage of the Key Club. For these staffs, placing a more specific table of contents on each division page becomes much more of a necessity and also makes the accuracy of the index even more important.

2013 Kaleidoscope Lugoff-Elgin High School

The endsheet of Lugoff-Elgin's 2013 book presents the spin-off phrases for the three sections of the book, a single-word explanation of what the reader can expect to find in each section and the range of pages in the section. The rest of the endsheet is devoted to theme presentation.



ACTIVITY

Your Name: _____

SPIN SOME SPIN-OFF PAGES

Take your theme and write spin-off phrases for the following sections. If your book will have fewer sections, see if any of the spin-offs you wrote would work. Otherwise, write new ones for each section of your yearbook.

ACADEMICS

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PEOPLE

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STUDENT LIFE

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NOTES!

Lesson 9
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate an understanding of the information that is appropriate for the table of contents as well as how to connect this information to the theme. I can...
- a. produce concise, clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style reflect the message of the theme and are appropriate for the task
 - b. use precise language and vocabulary to create spin-off phrases for each section that reflect the theme
 - c. use the placement and design of the table of contents to help direct the reader and reinforce the theme message
- 2.0 I understand what the table of contents is and its purpose, but I am still unsure of the content that should be included or how to connect this content to the theme.
- 1.0 I don't know what the table of contents is or its purpose in a yearbook.

Lesson 10

Colophon

The colophon is both a required part of the book as well as an opportunity to add a new dimension to theme presentation and interpretation. At its heart, the word colophon comes from Greek and is a list or description of how a book was produced.

With this in mind, a yearbook colophon should include the name of the company that printed the book, the number of copies that were ordered, the fonts used, the type of paper used and the cover specifications. If you are unsure of any of this information, contact your yearbook representative for help. The colophon generally appears near the back of the book, before or after the index, but before the closing pages.

Many staffs choose to include additional information such as the number and types of computers and cameras used in the production of the book, awards won by the previous book and a description of how the theme was determined. Finally, the colophon may also include a complete staff list with or without photos and an editor's note. An editor's note is primarily made up of "thanks" to the people who supported the staff and sometimes to individual members of the staff itself.

But the colophon doesn't have to be a dull presentation of information that only yearbook staff members care about.

Objectives – In this lesson, you will learn:

What a colophon is and the information that is expected to appear

The additional information that can be included in a colophon



2013 Decamhian Del Campo High School

Combining the traditional look of a colophon on the right side of the page, with a thank you note and a picture of the editorial board, The *Decamhian* staff presents a little bit about their spirited staff in a neat, theme-related package at the end of the index.

ACTIVITY

BUILDING A COLOPHON

Using the information from this lesson, begin writing a colophon for this year's yearbook. Decide what you think it should include, even if you don't know that information yet, such as font choices.

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Lesson 10
SCORE

RATE YOUR PROGRESS

- 4.0 I can do all tasks in 3.0 and I can teach others!
- 3.0 I can demonstrate an understanding of the information that is appropriate for the colophon as well as how to connect this information to the theme. I can...
 - a. produce concise, clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style reflect the message of the theme and are appropriate for the task
 - b. use precise language and telling details to add theme-related packages and copy that enhances and personalizes the colophon
 - c. use the placement and design of the colophon to help inform the reader of the book's production details and reinforce the theme message
 - d. gather the relevant information for the colophon including the book's specifications, equipment used, staff members, awards and/or theme inspiration
- 2.0 I understand what the colophon is and its purpose, but I am still unsure of the content that should be included or how to connect this content to the theme.
- 1.0 I don't know what the colophon is or its purpose in a yearbook.

NOTES!

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, starting from the top right of the teal banner and extending across the page.



MEET THE AUTHOR

Susan Masy is the yearbook adviser at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School in Shawnee, Kan., where her *Lair* yearbook staffs have been demonstrating excellence in writing and design for the past two decades. The *Lair* recently won its 18th Pacemaker award from the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) under Masy's guidance.

In 1999, Masy was chosen the National Yearbook Adviser of the Year by the Journalism Education Association (JEA). In 2013, Masy was inducted into the Kansas Scholastic Press Association (KSPA) Hall of Fame.

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