



COMMUNICATION: JOURNALISM EDUCATION TODAY
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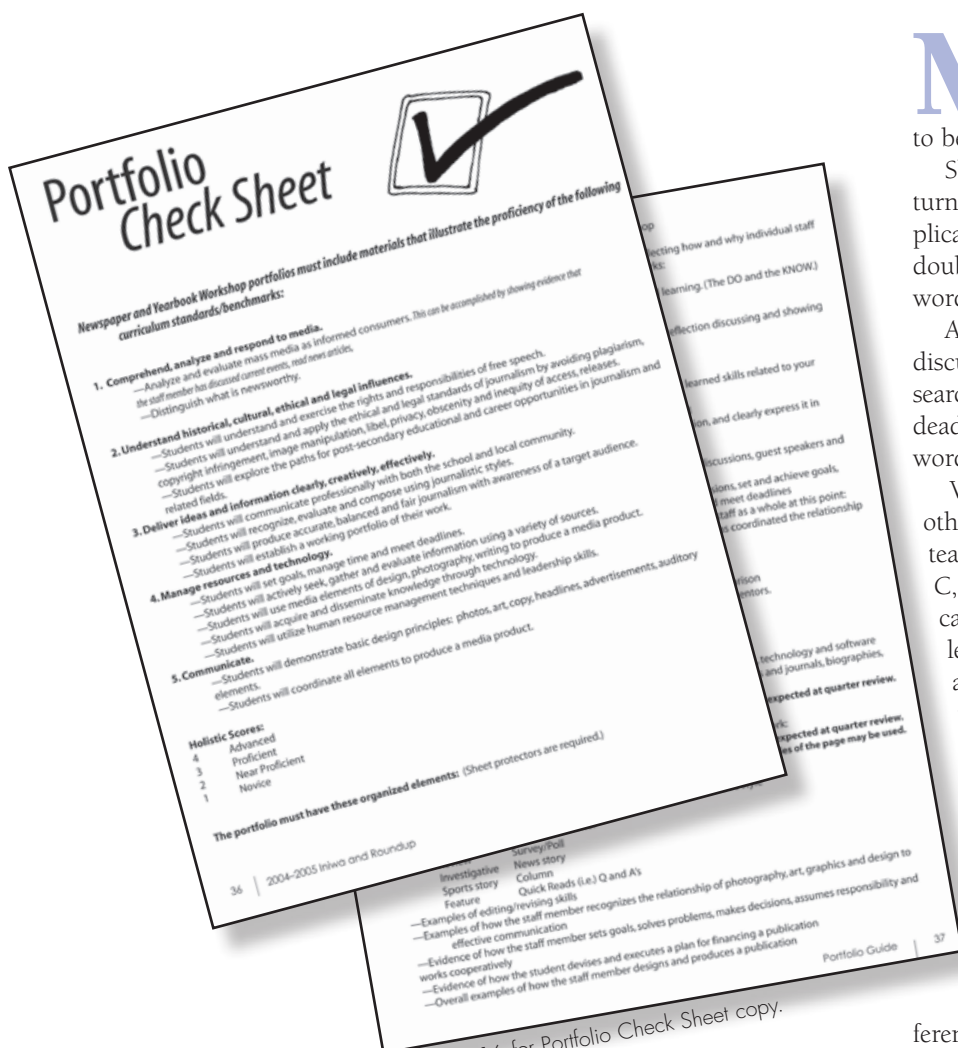
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What's a
teacher to do?

Grading



See page 16 for Portfolio Check Sheet copy.

Megan is a photographer who spends every weekend covering all the school's sporting events, but she often appears to be doing "very little" during class.

Shawn can take the results of a survey and turn them into an infographic that tells a complicated story at a glance, but his editor has to double-check his spelling on the most simple words.

And Kara grasps the potential impact of a discussion at the school board meeting and can search out sources to get facts she needs, but deadlines? She doesn't know the meaning of the word.

When it comes to grading these and all the other staffers in a production class, what's a teacher to do? Ultimately, each needs the A, B, C, D or F in the proper blank on the report card, but how can anyone compare — much less evaluate — such diverse learning styles and contributions to the publication? If grading a "traditional" class is hard, grading those in a production class often seems impossible.

That's probably why new advisers look for the perfect instrument — a grading form they can adopt to solve all their problems. Those attending the American Society of Newspaper Editors High School Journalism Institute at Kent State the last four summers have been no different. Many wanted us to simply hand them a form they could use and move on to the next topic.

By **CANDACE PERKINS BOWEN** with a little help from the other ASNE High School Journalism Institute instructors at Kent State — H.L. Hall, Susan Hathaway Tantillo and John Bowen

My ideas

Make grading easy

I “pay” the students as if they are employees. Pay is earned in points. Points are awarded for work turned in on deadline. The deadlines have enough lag time so that they can go through our “system.” Additional points are earned through advertising sales, ad layout, time spent outside school hours preparing the layout, reading the “real” news, and page editing duties. Everybody learns PageMaker. Everybody has some layout duties.

Here’s the system: Turn in stories to me. I write +100 in the corner and pass it on to the copy editor for close editing, meeting the paper’s style, checking names, etc. Everybody knows how many points it takes to get an A. If students want an A, they get more work.

No matter how many points one accumulates, no one, not even the editor, can get an A without making two ad contacts per nine weeks and completing seven media records. The editor must set the example. If the paper doesn’t come out on deadline, everybody fails. That has never happened. Two years ago, first-year students were astonished to find out that I did fail them all on the final exam when they didn’t have their back-to-school issue done by deadline (that’s their exam).

I try to operate the class similar to the process of a real newspaper. They must be held accountable to their readership and their advertisers, and me – the publisher.

My advice on grading: make it easier on yourself and harder on the kids.

MARY TEDROW, CJE, James Wood High School, Winchester, Va.

Everything must be perfect

My philosophy on grading has always been simple – mailable copy (The “old” typewriting teacher in me). Everything that gets sent out must be perfect, 100 percent, mailable copy, or else it’s a fail. Hence, I have always assessed the yearbook and newspaper in that manner.

The process: rough draft, two peer reviews, second draft, two peer reviews, third draft, teacher review, fourth draft and finally an editor review.

Additionally, everyone involved gets a collaborative grade – a 100, an 80, or a 50 for what appears in the paper. They also receive individual grades based on participation, initials on forms, etc. For the most part, 95 percent of my students pass with an “A” or a “B” as they are devoted to the program and want to be successful. While my students may not be heading directly to college, they are heading to the work market. Journalism prepares them in many ways for the work world, where they will be for the next 50 years.

From **HOLLY McDERMOTT**, CJE, Mary Moss Academy, Crownsville, Md.

But it doesn’t work that way.

Some teachers do fine with a system that tabulates student contributions to class and to the publication, giving point values to everything from making deadlines to mailing tear sheets to advertisers. With a handy calculator — or a math brain far better than mine — they add up the points and assign a grade. Other teachers do equally well with a much more subjective approach that includes instruments such as student self-evaluations, input from editors, string books and reflective journals.

In other words, there is no “right” way to grade any class, much less a production one. However, the ASNE instructors at Kent State came up with a check list of characteristics of a good grading system that might be useful to teachers of all temperaments and organizational abilities. Consider these guidelines:

- Find a method that works for you. If you know you won’t keep up with point totals for every little activity, don’t develop something requiring that. If you get uneasy when you can’t quantify your results, don’t settle for something that requires too much of your opinion. Probably the best system has some of each, but do tailor it to your style.
- Weight the grading so what’s important to you means a great deal in the final results. That means if you believe making deadlines is paramount for journalists, make sure those who miss them suffer appropriately. If you want students to learn teamwork, find some way to emphasize that in the grading system. This seems like a given, but it requires articulating the mission or goals of this class before you come up with the way to grade students.
- Explain your system up front. Be sure students — and even their parents — understand how it works and what they need to achieve to earn a certain grade — or to avoid a bad grade. Supplying rubrics for individual activities — news stories, features, other types of writing, page design, photos, etc. — can be useful.
- Keep individual differences in mind. It’s hard to put the square pegs in round holes — much less make writers, photographers, designers and ad salespersons accomplish exactly the same goals so....
- Provide opportunities for students to set their own goals — and evaluate how well they have done meeting them.
- Offer frequent feedback. No one wants to wait six weeks to find out how to write better leads ... and meanwhile has had to write three more, making the same mistakes every time.
- Allow ways for students to improve their grades if they are not pleased with how they are doing. The opportunity to improve relates to feedback, too, because students can’t be surprised with their grades during the last week of class and expect to make up for lost time.
- Realize that even the best systems from the most experienced advisers need tweaking and downright revamping from time to time. Consider that part of the process as you seek the seemingly elusive perfect way to grade production classes. ■

Taking the Mystery out of grading

Teachers in the English department at my school often use the phrase, “Why reinvent the wheel?” when speaking of materials used in classes. They are willing to share lesson plans, handouts or videos to help save time when we are all teaching many of the same units. Precious time can go toward teaching rather than toward writing a new test on *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The same should be true in my journalism class, but it is not. Every year I try to reinvent the wheel for grading advanced journalism, my newspaper production class.

I have solved the mystery fairly well in my Introduction to Journalism classes by using AP style quizzes, story grades, presentations, projects and journal writing. These are concrete scores, mostly using the point system, that show how I arrived at their final grades.

Newspaper class is a whole different challenge. Let’s look at the possible choices for grading.

Strategy 1: writing, meeting deadlines, editing, photography, layout, advertising

Strategy 2: communication, teamwork, initiative, cooperation, working independently, quality of writing, going beyond the call of duty, responsibility and organization.

Strategy 3: attendance, listening, taking notes, keeping handouts and using them, interview skills, phone etiquette.

All of those, in some percentage or another, should go into the grading of a newspaper staff. How do we sort it all

out? What do we concentrate on? How do we address those students who are upset because Ted (who goofs off frequently in class but is organized, looks for additional work to complete and always stays after school) gets a better grade than Marcia (who gets her work done in class but loses other people’s stories, doesn’t return phone calls and constantly complains about everything and everyone)?

Two years ago, after fighting this battle for 13 years, I finally turned the corner and came up with a system that works for me. My criteria boiled down to this: It had to be manageable for me and have a quick turn around time for the students. There had to be definite lines in the sand, that when a student crossed them, the grade would suffer. The mystery had to be removed. For years I was so unsure of the best way to grade that I would only give occasional hints if a student asked what they were getting. At the last minute of the marking period, I would have to decide what to do.

I looked at programs of award-winning advisers who utilize point systems so complicated that I would need an accountant to figure it all out. Many advisers let the students grade themselves or one another. Some use rubrics. Others use checklists.

I decided that I needed one or two concrete items for which I can show a score — when and if parents or administrators want justification for a student’s low grade.

When setting up any system, first start with deadlines. Be clear what is due and when. An easy deadline to check first is

By **MARY LOU NAGY** • mlnagy56@hotmail.com

Advanced Journalism/Staff Evaluation Name: _____
Issue: _____

Far Exceeds Normal Requirements Truly exceptional performance.
Exceeds Normal Requirements Superior performance that surpasses what is generally expected a majority of the time.
Meets Normal Requirements Competent day-to-day performance is obtained. Any shortcomings are generally balanced by some superior performance characteristics.
Meets Minimum Requirements Day-to-day performance generally shows some limitations that are not balanced by superior performance actions.
Fails to Meet Minimum Requirements Day-to-day performance shows significant limitations and definite need for improvement is noted.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION A — ACCOMPLISHMENT OF JOB REQUIREMENTS

ELEMENTS: COMMENTS: OVERALL RATING (Check only one)

- Quantity of work — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Completion of work on time — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Quality and accuracy of work completed — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Initiative in accepting responsibility — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION B — JOB KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE

ELEMENTS: COMMENTS: OVERALL RATING (Check only one)

- Knowledge of work unit purposes, goals and duties — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Command of skills needed — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Commitment to improving — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Adaptability to new developments in job — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION C — JOB RELIABILITY

ELEMENTS: COMMENTS: OVERALL RATING (Check only one)

- Dependability and reliability regarding work instructions — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Pursuit of efficiency and economy in the use of resources — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Degree of need for supervision — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Efficiency in the use of time — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION D — PERSONAL RELATIONS

ELEMENTS: COMMENTS: OVERALL RATING (Check only one)

- Ability to get along with others in the work unit — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Contributes to the promotion of morale — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Accepts appropriate direction from superiors — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Contributes to productivity of the work unit — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION E — COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

ELEMENTS: COMMENTS: OVERALL RATING (Check only one)

- Comprehension of oral and written directions — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Ability to listen and absorb new forms of information — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET
- Knowledge and use of correct means and channels for the communication of notices, complaints, etc. — ☐ FAR EXCEEDS ☐ EXCEEDS ☐ MEETS ☐ FALLS TO MEET

LIST ASSIGNMENTS:	DEADLINE:	ON TIME?	COMPLETED?	COMMENTS?

SUMMARY REMARKS:

From **LOGAN AIMONE** • aimone.l@mail.wsd.wednet.edu

For me to fill out the form takes about one minute per student because most of the work has been done by them. This form can also be used as a self-evaluation component instead of teacher evaluation piece. I settled on it because I needed something that was flexible for every staff member, that avoided a bunch of points for small tasks and was not teacher-intensive. Ultimately, I generally know how a student is performing in a production class — either the work is getting done or it isn't and it is of varying degrees of quality. This system also works well in a conference with the staff member or a parent.

1. I explain to each student his or her responsibilities, the details of which come from specific job descriptions or are general enough to apply to everyone (meet deadlines, be nice, show up, etc.).
2. I also explain expectations. There is a different set of expectations for a first-semester reporter than there is for a photographer or the sports editor or the editor, who may have been on staff for three years.
3. Then I explain to the class what each of the "domains" covers — where meeting deadlines, class productivity, challenging oneself, etc., each fit. I also explain what each of the standards means: for example, meets normal vs. exceeds normal requirements.
4. After each issue (each deadline in yearbook), I ask each student to write one sentence for each "domain" that explains to me how they feel they have met or exceeded the standard. They also list everything they did for that issue, especially if it is something they think I may have missed. Then they initial next to the level at which they believe they are performing.
5. Then I grade and make my own assessment. Sometimes I ask editors for help. Each performance level has a point value. The point values change over the semester. Early on, a student can earn extra points for far exceeding the standard, but later it becomes harder to far exceed because the standard has become the norm.

questions for their interviews. Ask them to have 15 questions for five or 10 points.

After that, give points for turning in the first draft. They either have it or they don't. Yes, there is always the computer malfunction or the other 99 bazillion extenuating circumstances. Make it clear that they have to turn in some evidence of work at those times no matter what. It is an all or nothing on the first deadline. You can adjust the number of points if the student has a legitimate excuse or you know the coach is terrible about sending over the scores. Flexibility is

a given in this job.

I can't emphasize enough how critical it is to keep on top of this responsibility. Holding them to the fire on deadlines with an all or nothing grade (five for on time, zero for five minutes late) will gain the staff's respect and grades will be in the book. Deadlines are real world — and parents who work know how critical it is to produce results on time at their jobs.

Giving a weekly quiz on copyediting or grammar is a great way to have a concrete grade in the book. It also has application to their work. Some advisers use

current event quizzes. I just use Associated Press *Stylebook* quizzes. Once students see quiz scores affect their grades, they will start taking quizzes seriously.

I also use a three-ring binder divided into five sections. The first section is for a copy of all their work. From a caption to a story to a page layout, it is all included. They may print a copy of the story and hole punch it or cut it out from the edition and mount it. In addition, there should be a form where all the work that was assigned is available so it is clear whether they completed what they signed up to do.

Next is a calendar. It must have large enough spaces for them to write in detail what they did during the production period. I used to let my editors get away with writing "Lay out" or "Reporting" when what I really wanted was "Met with Mr. Green for 20 minutes on the cross country story; typed up notes, talked with Sharon about layout, checked messages."

The next section is advertising, which includes contacts they made and/or contracts that were sold. I have forms for both that they include. My staff has a requirement to sell \$250 of ads each semester. They sign a sheet that says they will do this so I grade according to effort. Some people try hard but simply can't sell. Fortunately, we receive calls from advertisers, and I give those leads to the students who struggle.

The next section is the reflective letter and critique of the edition. This is their opportunity to tell me what happened during production that I may not have noticed, such as they ran an errand for someone or did extra work outside of class. They may talk about their frustration of not finding any advertisers or talk about a problem with a staff member that I can address at another time.

The last section is for handouts, forms, or articles that I give them from time to time. If the information on a handout is crucial, this can form the basis for a quiz.

I assign a point value to the binder as well as to completing it on time. I read the reflective letter carefully and use a checklist for the other info. It is helpful to return the binders to students within a few days.

Don't worry if each year the grading system needs tweaking. Using deadlines as the foundation, the rest of the system will fall into place. When there is no more guessing about grades, both the adviser and the students will relax and have more time to work on the publication. ■

SPREAD CHECKLIST

10 points per box – 200 points total.

CAPTIONS

- ☐ All captions are in correct font, and all group photo captions are done correctly. Group name in bold: Row 1: name, name, name. Row 2: name, name, name. Two spaces after first colon, only one space after all other colons, period at end of each row's names.
- ☐ Every photo has a caption, and all are properly justified.
- ☐ Every caption is two sentences long.
- ☐ Every first sentence of caption is in present tense and tells WHO is in the photo and WHAT is going on. (You must give all the names of all the people in photo unless it is a group of more than five people.)
- ☐ Every second sentence tells information/a story that could not possibly be known by simply looking at photo.
- ☐ Every second sentence is interesting; no "duh" or dull second sentences.

PHOTOS

- ☐ All photos lead the eye into the spread.
- ☐ Dominant photo is especially clear and interesting (emotion, action, reaction, interaction).
- ☐ All photos are clear.
- ☐ Photos: a variety of people are used and a variety of action is represented. (No one is repeated on a spread unless there is a compelling reason. "There were no other photos" is NOT a compelling reason.)
- ☐ All photos are properly and effectively cropped to enhance the photo (no body parts cut off) and are stickered or placed in correct file on computer.

HEADLINES

- ☐ Has a headline and is in the correct font.
- ☐ Headline grabs attention – is witty, clever, word-play, pun, etc.

COPY

- ☐ All copy is in correct font.
- ☐ All copy has interest value to the people who are featured on the spread. Copy is NOT simply "this is what this club/sport is."

FINALIZING

- ☐ Every name has been checked against the official class list.
- ☐ No misspellings; no strange spacing issues; all punctuation is correct.
- ☐ Page has been printed and placed in envelope along with all other necessary materials, including photos.
- ☐ All elements are spaced properly, with one pica between all elements unless there is a purposeful and stylistic reason for using alternative spacing.
- ☐ The envelope is completely and appropriately filled out.

COMMENTS

From **RACHEL ENGELHARDT** • rengelhardt@ncusd203.org

AN 11-STEP CHECKLIST

Your name: _____

Topic of your spread: _____ Pg #s: _____

Section in book where your spread is found: _____

Section editor of this section: _____

From **RACHEL ENGELHARDT**

rengelhardt@ncusd203.org

All of my students have to do multiple spreads per grading period. I have switched to giving two grades: (1) the process work and (2) a quality grade per spread. This is because I found that students could potentially go through the whole process, which is good, but still not have a high-quality spread.

	THE ASSIGNMENT	POINTS POSSIBLE	SIGNATURE HERE	POINTS RECEIVED
1	Complete "Beat sheet" to gather information and show to editor.	10		
2	Take photos of your beat (or make sure that a photographer takes photos for you) – write down info as you shoot photos. (Have photo editor sign off when you turn in the film or when you receive pics from her.)	20		
3	Prepare 25 interview questions and get them signed.	10		
4	Conduct interview(s) and take notes, get signatures of interviewees – show interview notes to editor.	20		
5	Type out rough draft of copy, save it to disk and to "Copy" folder, get rough draft reviewed and signed.	30		
6	Select and crop photos, design layout; save and print out copy of layout; get layout reviewed and approved.	30		
7	Write quality captions and get captions reviewed.	20		
8	Make any and all revisions as needed (as suggested by editors) and get revised layout reviewed and signed by section editor.	20		
9	Make any and all revisions as needed (as suggested by section editor) and get polished, revised layout reviewed and signed by editor.	20		
10	Make any and all revisions as needed (as suggested by editor) and get polished, revised layout reviewed and signed by adviser.	20		
11	Make final changes suggested by the adviser. Save, print and submit.	20		
		220		

The purpose of this sheet is to ensure that you go through a process. While some people do the process automatically, others do not. The benefits are to get points for doing what you should just automatically do so your spread will look polished and professional. Signatures help ensure that you know who is in charge of what and that staff members communicate with the editors throughout the entire process of spread production. Going through a process of creating, getting feedback from editors and revising helps the yearbook be top quality.

GRADING RUBRIC – STORIES

WRITING: Each story written receives three grades worth a total of 60 pts.:

1. *Story*: How well is the story written? Is the story complete? Does story adhere to journalistic principles? (20 pts.)
2. *Editing*: How free of grammatical and mechanical errors is the story? Does the story adhere to journalism style rules? Have names been checked for correct spelling? (20 pts.)
3. *Deadline*: Students who beat the deadline earn an extra point for each day early the completed stories are turned in. Students who meet the deadline earn 20 pts. Stories turned in a day late earn only 15 pts. (C). Stories turned in more than a day late earn students no deadline points at all.

If a student writes more than one story, the scores for each category are averaged. Plus, the student receives five extra credit points for each additional story that meets deadline.

PAGE PREPARATION: This grade includes participation and effort exerted during the week we put the paper together. Also considered are attitude, completion of responsibilities, and use of time. See the grading rubric for more delineation of the qualities and characteristics expected.

EXTRA EFFORT: Points may be given for extra tasks taken on by the student. These tasks may include taking pictures, creating graphics, selling ads, preparing mailings, writing for *The Alt*, etc. Students who wish an A in this course must help with these tasks. The adviser determines how many extra effort points to give.

GRADING RUBRIC – SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA

	A (100%)	B (89%)	No credit
EFFORT/ ENTHUSIASM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer story ideas not only for self but also for others • Uses time in class effectively; often comes in during free periods or stays after school to finish work • Interviews are thorough and cover a variety of people and grades • Stories are well done • Seeks help when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes story ideas if asked • Generally uses class time effectively; sees that someone finishes work • Stories and interviews not thorough. Tends to interview friends or the same people. • Seeks help occasionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely offers story ideas • Shows little or no effort in completing designated jobs during time allowed • Stories are incomplete; shows little evidence of interviews • Rarely seeks help
JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows/proves ability to write journalistically • Makes sincere effort to write all assigned stories well • Avoids libel and other unethical practices (obscenity, copyright violations, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays journalistic knowledge but has lapses • Proofreading may not be as thorough as could be • Content could be more complete • Avoids libel and other unethical practices • Acts on criticism offered on previous work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sloppy writing with no attempt to seek help • Libelous • Made-up quotes • Unnecessary obscenity • Writes erroneously in first or second person • Tastefulness is usually questionable • Fails to act on criticism of previous work
COOPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is willing to help when able • Works well with others • Willing to learn • Does what is asked • Reliable • Willing to write a variety of stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps out but forgets, gives excuses or fails to follow-through • Works well with others • Willing to learn • Tends to write only stories that he "likes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to sit around and do only what he is told to do • Does not help; doesn't work with others when asked • Ignores suggestions for changes in stories • Refuses to write stories that he does not "like"
EXCELLENCE IN POSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets layout and story deadlines • Completes duties of his position • Takes initiative • Does more than position requires • Is flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfills only assigned responsibilities • Sometimes offers excuses for work not meeting deadline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglects responsibilities • Doesn't meet assigned deadlines

**Contributed by
SANDY GAUL**
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I still fudge the points to give the grades I think they deserve, but this at least gives a starting point and it lets the students understand my expectations. I revised the rubric for my yearbook class. I usually weight the various tasks a little differently and add a section for bonus points such as taking pictures outside of school, selling ads or organizing the mailing.

Editor in Chief Rubric

ISSUE: _____

Score: _____/100

Name: _____

_____ **50 points: Editor in Chief**

- _____ Sees that the paper's production and writing run smoothly.
_____ Approve all text before it is placed on pages.
_____ Works with staff members to solve problems.
_____ Works with adviser on planning and producing the paper.
_____ Is organized for editorial board meetings and class meetings.
_____ Sees that the paper is taken to press and is distributed at school on time.
_____ Works with section editors, artists, and photographers to assure attractive pages by deadline.
_____ Helps keep staff on-task and motivated.
_____ Strictly enforce copy and design style.
_____ Spends hours after school and on free time to help staff.
_____ Attends at least three late night/ production nights for each issue.

Story Ideas (include written copy) _____/10 points

Completes 5, written story ideas in correct format, easily readable with original ideas.

Editing _____/20 points

[This rubric is applied to the "group project" of the editing by both editors in chief.]

- _____ Meets all deadlines and editing is appropriate for each.
_____ Makes substantial content corrections and leaves clear, constructive criticism for writers.
_____ Finds and corrects a majority of the style and grammar errors.

Late Night/ Production _____/20 points

- _____ Approves all general dummy layouts (on computer) before section editors begin work on real design.
_____ Keeps editors on-task after school
_____ Helps editors with any design problems
_____ Stays until the paper is 'put to bed'.

ADDITIONAL WORK/ NOTES: _____

Contributed by
APRIL RYAN •
msryanpchs@yahoo.
com

I've adapted my rubrics from ones shared by adviser Robin Stover of Rock Bridge High School in Columbia, Mo. Each semester, all students at Parkway Central High School (Chesterfield, Mo.) are given a citizenship grade in each class. Others may want to adapt it for use in determining another grade or criteria for honors credit, a letter or Quill and Scroll membership. "O" is for outstanding; "S" for satisfactory; "I" for improvement needed; and "U" for unacceptable.

Citizenship Report

NAME: _____

Initiative/ Responsibility

- O** Actively seeks to find work that will contribute to the publication. Checks box, including writers' box, and keeps an organized staff binder. Volunteers for extra assignments when they are needed and/or uses own resources to fulfill duties.
S Accepts assignments and follows instructions in carrying them out.
I Consistently needs directions and is casual or careless about carrying them out.
U Shows little ability or willingness to discern what is needed on the publication and/or figure out ways to contribute.

Performance

- O** Consistently does superior or excellent work – on time or early. Happy to rewrite, reprint, or redo to achieve superior quality.
S Work is usually very good or excellent and meets the deadlines. Will redo or polish willingly.
I Work is fairly good but insufficient in quality and/or quantity.
U Work is often late. Reluctant to work or put forth effort. Performs little or no use to the publication.

Cooperation

- O** Cooperates at all times with other student staff members, with sponsor and with faculty, showing maturity in all relationships.
S Consistently cooperative with both staff and faculty. Gets along adequately with most people, most of the time, but has difficulty in some relationships or in special circumstances.
I Uncooperative, hard to get along with, requires special treatment.
U A troublemaker; presence is definitely detrimental to the staff.

Classroom Work

- O** Works every day in class. Never needs monitoring.
S Works consistently. Seldom needs monitoring.
I Takes advantage. Needs monitoring.
U A goof-off and/or a discipline problem.

WEEKLY POINT SHEET

PHOTOGRAPHER _____

CLASS PERIOD _____

FOR WEEK OF _____

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the information requested below as completely as possible. If you leave things out, you will not get credit for them. Be sure every request for points is documented as specified on the points sheet. This is an easy 75 points each week. All materials for the week need to be clipped together on this sheet and placed in your point folder. Failure to do so will result in a 15 percent reduction in your grade for that week. This is your responsibility. Documentation of what you have done is a major requirement for your portfolio grade.

JOB COMPLETED	POSSIBLE	AWARDED
Point folder completed and turned in on time	25	
Points from chronology	50	
Photography point verification sheet (credits)		
Mini-deadline grading sheet (must be attached)		
Deadline sheet (must be attached)		
Outside hours (detailed)		
TOTAL for week		

Contributed by
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PHOTOGRAPHY POINT VERIFICATION

PHOTOGRAPHER _____

CLASS PERIOD _____

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the information requested below as completely as possible. You must earn a minimum of two photo credits for each marking period. You must attach printed copies or photocopies of the photos to this sheet. Be sure to attach this sheet and transfer points to your weekly point sheet.

JOB COMPLETED	POINTS	POSSIBLE
In School Event(s)	1/2	/25
Before School Activity	1	/50
After School Activity	1	/50

Subtotal _____

Grade: A B C D F

Photographer editor's or adviser's initials: _____

Total for the marking period: _____/125

POINTS FOR PUBLICATION GRADE

All points must be kept on the Point Sheets from class. Do not lose that sheet; lost sheets = lost points. Also, do not lose this sheet. It may not be replaceable. All points based on good faith effort. Values may be raised for exceptional work or lowered for misuse of the system. ("Double dipping" is discouraged. Do quality work and the points will come. Remember: Early is on time; on time is late. The quality is in the details. Points given at teacher discretion – not when asked for. Asking for points may eliminate you from this option. Find ways to encourage others, especially when deadlines approach and stress rises.

SUPERVISION OF OTHERS (editor, business manager, etc.) = 100 pts. or more at completion of paper

For consistent, positive, constructive leadership; filling in on individual jobs where needed — whatever the job; reliability counts. Editor is ultimately responsible for a successful newspaper. Business manager is ultimately responsible for all ads.

AD PAGE LAYOUT (ad manager) = 100 pts.

Scans images and designs ads as needed. Produces ads on final page. (When page is complete and ready for printing.

AD DESIGN in Adobe Photoshop & PageMaker (for non-ad managers) = 15 pts. per ad

Available for anyone willing to work on an ad design under the direction of an ad manager.

NEWS STORY = 100 pts. per assigned, usable article

Must use appropriate story design (news, feature, sports, etc.). Divided by number of authors (total per person is adjustable).

SUBSTANTIAL SIDEBAR (beyond normal story package requirement) = 50 pts.

RESEARCH = 20 pts. for serious depth to help out another reporter

Researcher and reporter are both responsible for accuracy of information. (Inaccurate info = loss of points.) Keep a log of your use of time, sources investigated and interviews.

COLUMN = 100 pts. for completed, accepted, thorough column

EDITORIAL = 100 pts. for actual writing; 30 pts. for assisting (adjustable)

REVIEW (movie, restaurant, book, music) = 100 pts. for acceptable review (modified for multiple authors)

PAGE PRODUCTION — "Page Editor" — non-advertising = 100 pts. per page completed

Includes news pages, editorial pages and all accompanying graphs, charts, photos, images, etc. Supervises all authors for the page — ultimately responsible for the final page. Must fill in if an author "drops the ball." (Points may be raised for this.)

ASSISTING PRODUCTION = 20 pts. for substantial help

INTERVIEWS = 2 pts. for each extended answer

For points, show in writing: the question, the answer and the signature of the respondent that the quotes are accurate. Telephone? Get a signature.

HEADLINE WRITING = 10 pts. for a creative, eye-catching headline (which gets used)

This means helping a page editor create a particularly excellent headline. Must follow the rules of headlining (subject, verb, active, etc.). Must fit in the space allotted on the page — therefore, needs to be done during page production.

GRAPHICS LAYOUT = up to 30 pts. per graphic

This involves art, photos, flag, images, cartoons, etc. It goes beyond normal design duties. It means helping with graphics in a significant way.

SCANNING = 5 pts. per usable scan

This is for helping an ad manager or page editor. You must demonstrate a strong knowledge of how to prepare images for publication using Photoshop. Must use correct file name protocol. [Name of provider][Title of item][Purpose of item] example: fayram-arco-ad

IDEA that solves significant problem (either in publishing system or technology) = up to 50 pts.

SOLVING SIGNIFICANT TECHNOLOGY PROBLEM = 30-50 pts.

CARTOON (editorial or entertaining) = up to 50 pts.

for art showing awareness of audience, strong purpose, relevance to other articles in the newspaper.

PHOTOGRAPHY = 5 pts. / usable photo (even if not finally used) — should be digital

EDITING = 5 pts. per substantial edit; show edited copy to teacher

REVISION = 5 pts. per substantial revision

Turn in all drafts with final copy for points. An author or editor can "hire" someone else to revise an article. This includes reducing the length of an article that is too long for the space allotted.

MISCELLANEOUS TASKS that need doing = negotiable

Come up with the idea or act on something assigned. Please do not ask, "What can I do for a task?" (This just takes editors away from their main duties.)

RUNNING STAFF ERRANDS = 5 pts.

ROOM CLEANING = 2 pts.

AFTER SCHOOL CONTRIBUTION = 10 pts. per hour of dedicated work

This is beyond normal assignment duties. (For example, if a page is not getting produced fast enough in class, the page editor does not get extra points for staying after. However, if a reporter or editor stays after, even if the story or page is complete just to help another, these points can apply.) If other points apply (see writing headlines, scanning, etc.), those points take priority. Do not "double dip."

PAGE PROOFING = 10 pts. / occasion

- loss of points if significant errors later found on page
- corrections made on printed proof

DISPLAYING SINCERELY POSITIVE ATTITUDE = 10 pts.

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GOAL = 200 PTS.

- Points removed for missing deadlines: 20% of possible points per day late.
- 24-hour turnaround required on revised articles.

All story points awarded when story becomes PUBLISHABLE

- formatted in the computer for paste-up
- (Palatino 10-point font, single-spaced, ¶ indented one pica)
- Remember: paper copies (for editing) must be 12-point font, double-spaced ... then final formatting must be single-spaced, 10-point font.

JOURNALISTIC WRITING RUBRIC

REPORTER _____

CLASS PERIOD _____

ASSIGNMENT TITLE _____

DEADLINE _____

HEADLINE _____

CHECK ONE: ☐ on time ☐ excused late ☐ unexcused late

1. LEAD: _____ /10 points

Lead is appropriate for this type of news article; opens with and emphasizes the appropriate key thought. Provides information in an interesting, clear way. 5W's and H presented early enough (in lead for summary, or in nutgraph for delayed lead). Uses appropriate voice.

2. BODY: _____ /20 points

Body captures reader's attention through use of colorful, striking and meaningful words and phrases. Active voice/consistent tone. Facts tell the story more than writer interpretation. The body paragraphs feature appropriate facts and main ideas, use effective transitions and make use of quotations with proper attribution for all news sources. Details are accurate. Avoids editorializing. Clear and concise. Balanced and fair. Writer stays out of article. Length is appropriate for the type of article and amount of information available.

3. ORGANIZATION: _____ /10 points

The method of organization is appropriate to the topic of the article. Presents the material in an orderly development of words, sentences and paragraphs to create a clear and unified composition. Follows the most appropriate pattern of this type of article. Facts presented in descending order of importance (unless appropriate to do otherwise). Begins and ends with facts rather than generalizations or opinions.

4. CONVENTIONS: _____ /10 points

Writer has used acceptable patterns in spelling, punctuation, grammar/style/usage, appropriate person (usually third), tense (usually past), presentation/appearance (font size/style, spacing), paragraphing.

NOTE: When required, the assignment shows evidence of editing from draft to final copy and/or on the final copy itself. Included in the assignment are all required notes, practice leads and first and/or second drafts (if required by assignment). Points outside the scale above can be lost due to missing material.

TOTAL: _____ /50 POSSIBLE

Grading Scale: F = 29 & below, D = 30 - 34, C = 35 - 39, B = 40 - 44, A = 45 - 50

If teacher gives permission to revise for a higher grade, the article must be returned promptly (24-hour turn-around). Must include original article and significant revision beyond material marked (not simply proofreading).

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PORTFOLIO CHECK SHEET

Contributed by **LINDA BALLEW**, Great Falls High School (Mont.) • linda_ballew@gfps.k12.mt.us

OBJECTIVES

Newspaper and yearbook workshop portfolios must include materials that illustrate the proficiency of the following curriculum standards/benchmarks. Each item will be graded using holistic scores: 4 advanced, 3 proficient, 2 near proficient, 1 novice.

1. Comprehend, analyze and respond to media.

- Students will analyze and evaluate mass media as informed consumers. They will show evidence that they have discussed current events, read news articles,
- Students will be able to distinguish what is newsworthy.

2. Understand historical, cultural, ethical and legal influences.

- Students will understand and exercise the rights and the responsibilities of free speech.
- Students will understand and apply the ethical and legal standards of journalism by avoiding plagiarism, copyright infringement, image manipulation, libel, privacy, obscenity and inequity of access, releases.
- Students will explore the paths for post-secondary educational and career opportunities in journalism and related fields.

3. Deliver ideas and information clearly, creatively, effectively.

- Students will communicate professionally with both the school and local community.
- Students will recognize, evaluate and compose using journalistic styles.
- Students will produce accurate, balanced and fair journalism with awareness of a target audience.
- Students will establish a working portfolio of their work.

4. Manage resources and technology.

- Students will set goals, manage time and meet deadlines.
- Students will actively seek, gather and evaluate information using a variety of sources.
- Students will use media elements of design, photography, writing to produce a media product.
- Students will acquire and disseminate knowledge through technology.
- Students will utilize human resource management techniques and leadership skills.

5. Communicate.

- Students will demonstrate basic design principles with photos, art, copy, headlines, advertisements, auditory elements.
- Students will coordinate all elements to produce a media product.

ELEMENTS

The portfolio must have these organized elements: (Sheet protectors are required.)

- ☐ A **TITLE PAGE** identifying the staff member, his or her staff position and date.
- ☐ Compile and submit a section with **PERSONAL EVALUATIONS** for each review period reflecting how and why individual staff members have met these required curriculum standards/benchmarks.
- ☐ Write **DAILY JOURNALS** specifically outlining accomplished daily activities and acquired learning. (The DO and the KNOW.) These will be submitted for midterm review.

- ☐ Referring to the daily journals for specific insights and details, write a **SELF-ANALYTICAL REFLECTION** discussing and showing evidence of the following:

- How your skills have improved
- What you consider your strongest assets, weakest traits needing practice and learned skills related to your particular job performance
- The ways you plan to improve job performance for the next evaluation period
- Evidence of your ability to seek, to gather, to analyze and to evaluate information as well as to clearly express it in content
- Your understanding of your First Amendment rights
- Your awareness of journalism career information based on classroom discussions, guest speakers and individual involvement
- How you have developed leadership roles to solve problems, to make decisions, to set and to achieve goals, to organize, to assume responsibility, to work cooperatively, to effectively time-manage and to meet deadlines
- The strengths and weaknesses of the actual product completed by the staff as a whole at this point: writing, advertising, design, photography. You will explain how the publication has coordinated the relationship of photography, art, graphics and design for effective communication. **This will be submitted for a quarter review.**

- ☐ A section discussing a brief overview of **JOURNALISM CAREER INFORMATION** and media comparison, This section will include responses to mentors, to guest speakers and to job and educational inquiries.

- ☐ A section **REVIEWING A NONFICTION READING REQUIREMENT** includes two items:

- a weekly newspaper/magazine article;
- two nonfiction books per quarter. The readings may cover the following topics: design, color, typography, Web sites, technology and software know-hows, photography, writing (either how-to's or samples of journalistic writings and journals, biographies, political or philosophical writings, speeches, video know-hows, etc. **Progress will be noted at the midterm review, and the finished reading and reviews will be expected at quarter review.**

- ☐ A section containing **INTERVIEW NOTES, ARTICLE AND LAYOUT DRAFTS AND FINAL PAGES, CLASSROOM WORK: Progress will be noted at the midterm review, and the finished reading and reviews will be expected at quarter review. Materials for the semester final exit portfolio interview must not exceed 35 double-sided pages.** For example, include:

- Stories that demonstrate the student's knowledge of various journalistic style. The stories should include editorials, letters to the editor, reviews, surveys/polls, investigative news stories, sports stories, columns, features, alternative copy
- Examples of editing/revising skills
- Examples of how the staff member recognizes the relationship of photography, art, graphics and design to effective communication
- Evidence of how the staff member sets goals, solves problems, makes decisions, assumes responsibility and works cooperatively
- Evidence of how the student devises and executes a plan for financing a publication
- Overall examples of how the staff member designs and produces a publication

Self-assess

*Student develop professional finesse
as they critique their own performance*

Usually students, especially younger ones, do not want to evaluate their performance as journalists — at least not at first. After all, students who critique their own work cannot escape responsibility for the grade they receive. And often students arrive armed with the handy notion that grades reflect little more than the whim of a teacher.

But sooner or later, if not in the first grading period, then certainly by the second and succeeding quarters, students who “self-assess” begin to see the direct relationship between their work and their grades. Soon almost all staff members recognize that they are being treated as responsible young adults and begin to fulfill that expectation.

Consequently, they are more likely to do good work and to meet deadlines. The students know that they earned the grades they received. The grade is not a mystery. It is not a surprise. The grade reflects their degree of commitment, the quality of their work and how much they have learned.

The system magnifies in the students all those best qualities that any journalism experience encourages. Its greatest merit is that it requires that students be accountable for their own performance.

This is the way students assess their work in my journalism class. Near the end

of the grading period, they must submit a packet that contains four essential documentations:

1. PERSONAL LOG

Because this class involves both direct instruction and production lab, class activities vary widely. On production days every student may be performing a different task — for example, setting up or conducting an interview, keying in an article, conducting Internet research, scanning sports photos, conferencing, working on layout, drawing a cartoon or using Illustrator. In the manual, the students have a blank calendar. Each day they record, on this calendar, a brief description of their journalism activity, in or out of class.

2. COPIES OF WORK

The packet includes photographs, text, tables, sidebars, etc. If the work has not been published, the student submits revised printouts. All drafts, transcripts of interviews, research and other documentation are also included.

3. SUMMARY OF LEARNING

Students are given guidelines for the narrative about learning experiences during the grading period. At a minimum, the narrative should address these questions:

SELF-EVALUATION

- by seeks to improve our publication by seeking new stories and fresh and relevant feature ideas.
4. Volunteers for assignments and/or uses own resources to fulfill duties and complete assignments.
 3. Accepts assignments when they are made and follows instructions adequately in carrying them out.
 2. Consistently needs directions and is casual about carrying them out.
 1. Shows no interest and/or ability to contribute to the quality of our publication.

Responsibility/Dependability

5. Actively takes responsibility for the quality of our publication.
 - Carries out individual responsibilities.
 - Volunteers to help others.
 - Performs extra duties.
 - Frequently works after school.
4. Consistently dependable in carrying out his/her duties . Helps others when asked.
3. Usually carries out duties. May need to be reminded.
2. Careless about completing duties. Seems uninterested in cooperating with others to create a quality publication.
1. Thoroughly untrustworthy and/or uncooperative most or all of the time.

Growth/Learning

5. Exhibits eagerness to learn and applies new learning to improve in all aspects of publication process.
4. Learns new skills and concepts and uses these to improve quality of work in all aspects of journalism.
3. Learning is limited to specific skill areas (writing, layout,etc.) or has little impact on work.
2. Learning is very limited and does not have an apparent effect on work.
1. Work shows no growth.

TOTAL = SELF-EVALUATION Score

Scale

15	=	100	12	=	88	9	=	76	6	=	64
14	=	96	11	=	84	8	=	72	5	=	60
13	=	92	10	=	80	7	=	68			

To complete your SELF-ASSESSMENT, average your PRODUCTION and SELF-EVALUATION scores.

TOTAL SELF ASSESSMENT SCORE

- What was your most important new learning experience?
- Of what achievement were you the most proud?
- What improvements have you noticed in your habits, methods or work in general?
- What did you struggle most with?
- What do you hope to learn next grading period?

4. COPY OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Self-Assessment is composed of two equal parts. In the first, students assess the work they have completed. This is their production score.

a. Production

Students at my high school may use journalism once to meet their English requirement. Moreover, parents and administrators expect all journalism students to write. Therefore, all students, regardless of their skill level, must write.

Less ambitious and less confident students, or those who have not yet had much training may limit their ambitions and choose smaller assignments. Weaker writers often elect to write short articles or briefs and assume other responsibilities. However, a quick calculation shows that a student who writes only two small

articles may, in fact, earn as much as 90% for production.

The penalty for not meeting deadline is appropriately stiff. The system is intended to encourage students to (1) choose manageable assignments, (2) do their best work the first time and (3) meet deadlines. Conscientious students are rewarded fairly, and those who don't take their staff responsibilities seriously are also treated fairly.

For documentation, the editors and I also post a performance chart in the publication room. On it, we record the dates when drafts and revisions are completed.

The second part of the self-assessment is a holistic self-evaluation in which students must take a good look at both their contribution to the newspaper staff and to their learning.

b. Self-evaluation

After students have gathered all the evidence of their work, examined their logs, written their narratives and assessed their production, completing the self-evaluation is simple. It also provides an almost fool-proof reflection of the students' work. Not surprisingly, I almost always agree precisely with the students' self-assessment. If students err, it is usually because they assess their work too harshly.

Although I reserve the right to override

PRODUCTION

The quantity of your work, its quality, and punctuality determine your production score. When two issues are produced during a grading period, you must complete two production sheets and average.

To compute your production grade, apply the following formula:

1. Begin with Quantity: *Determined by assignments completed for each issue. Circle the best description and record your Basic Score.*

100 Points

- 1 Large article (1/2 to 1 page, 1/2 of a double-truck spread)
- 2 Medium articles
- 3 Small articles (briefs)

85 Points

- 1 Medium Article
- 2 Small articles

Basic Score (100 or 85) _____

2. Add or Subtract Quality Points: *Circle the best description of your writing experience and subtract from or add to Basic Score.*

Outstanding First Draft	+5
Revisions required	1 0
	2 -5
	3 -10
	4 -15

Add or Subtract _____

3. Add or Subtract Punctuality Points: *Circle the best description and subtract from or add to Basic Score.*

Ahead of deadline	+5
On deadline	0
1 day late	-5
2 days late	-10
3 days late	-15
4 days late	-20
5 days late	-25

Add or Subtract _____

TOTAL = PRODUCTION SCORE _____

a student's self-evaluation, I have never lowered the grade. Occasionally, I have given a more generous assessment.

And that's not to say that quizzes, exercises, graphic notebooks and other required assignments don't count. They do. Occasionally, if it is a large assignment, I may announce how a grade can be raised or lowered for "Growth/Learning" on the self-evaluation.

We also record quiz grades and other miscellaneous assignment scores on the performance chart. Students allude to these grades in their narrative and consider them in calculating the score for "Growth/Learning" on the self-evaluation.

Because I do not subjectively evaluate the quality of the student writing, cutthroat competition is not a problem. Also, staff members tend to be more cooperative with one another.

Since I have used this system, the sweetest reward has been that students do better work when they are largely responsible for assessing the quality of their work. The positive benefits are enormous. Everyone wins. Most important, the students who work harder in all areas of producing a newspaper simply learn more. They also, some for the first time, learn that grades reflect and enhance learning.

The adviser has less stress because it is simple and easy to assign grades that are authentic. In fact, because of the nature of the beast and the constant give and take, teachers usually have a good idea of what grade our journalism students deserve. This system merely provides documentation to support that grade (without using a cumbersome point system) and assures that the students, too, understand the validity of the grade. Most important, they know what they can do to improve it.

Parents, whether they are pleased or displeased with the grade, have to admit that it is valid because they can access the documentation prepared by the students themselves. And finally, the higher quality of the work each student performs enhances the publication.

This system has evolved during the decade that I have been teaching journalism. It is as authentic and fair as a grading system can be. It accurately reflects the student achievement and learning and gives every student, regardless of his or her skills or talent, the same opportunity to excel. Most important, it genuinely promotes learning — something that cannot be said for all grading methods. ■

Rubrics

Provide structure to grading in workshop-based class

Rubrics. The first time the head of my department told me I needed to write rubrics for every one of my journalism story styles, I groaned. What a waste of time and energy, I thought. Simply another case of bureaucratic nonsense that impinges on the real business of teaching and advising a student newspaper.

I have always considered myself lucky to teach in a workshop-based journalism class, a place where I had the freedom to do small group and one-on-one work with my 60+ staff members. As a result, I had never felt a need to codify a formal set of rubrics for each different type of story.

We had a style manual that included a host of journalism style rules reporters were expected to follow, and we talked in class about what went into different types of stories. Students received individual feedback in conferences and on rough drafts.

Plus, I already taught them about narrative leads, the differences between an editorial and a personal column, the elements of writing a good review, the hazards of passive voice and the purpose of a solid nut graph — and oh, so much more — so why did I need to write rubrics?

During the next several months, as I

crafted and recrafted a set of rubrics for nine different types of stories, I discovered that writing and using rubrics has enhanced my teaching by making me clarify my expectations in specific ways.

First, I had to determine the categories I was going to use for each story type. Each rubric has nine categories. I originally thought the categories would be the same for all story types, but they actually have some variation. After all, categories for reviews are not necessarily the same categories I want to use to evaluate feature stories or hard news.

Generating these categories became interesting fodder for journalism room discussions about what was essential for different stories and helped editors and staff to come to heightened awareness of the various nuances that each type of story had.

While the categories varied to some degree for different types of stories, there were also certain similarities. All stories needed an effective and appropriate lead. The description of what that lead might entail might

RACHEL ENGELHARDT said she is using a new scheme for grading yearbook spreads this year, a rubric based on 220 points per spread with five categories: captions, photos, headline, copy and final touches, each worth 40-45 points generally in 5-point increments.

Spread Grade Sheet

Name: _____ Spread: _____ Page numbers: _____

POINTS	POINTS EARNED	DESCRIPTIONS
FOR CAPTIONS: 45 points possible		
10		All captions are in correct font and all group photo captions are done correctly. Group names in bold. Row 1: name, name, name. Row 2: name, name, name. 2 space after last column only. 1 space after all other column. Period at end of each row's name. (For sports: "1st", "2nd", "3rd", "4th", "5th", "6th", "7th", "8th", "9th", "10th", "11th", "12th", "13th", "14th", "15th", "16th", "17th", "18th", "19th", "20th", "21st", "22nd", "23rd", "24th", "25th", "26th", "27th", "28th", "29th", "30th", "31st", "32nd", "33rd", "34th", "35th", "36th", "37th", "38th", "39th", "40th", "41st", "42nd", "43rd", "44th", "45th", "46th", "47th", "48th", "49th", "50th", "51st", "52nd", "53rd", "54th", "55th", "56th", "57th", "58th", "59th", "60th", "61st", "62nd", "63rd", "64th", "65th", "66th", "67th", "68th", "69th", "70th", "71st", "72nd", "73rd", "74th", "75th", "76th", "77th", "78th", "79th", "80th", "81st", "82nd", "83rd", "84th", "85th", "86th", "87th", "88th", "89th", "90th", "91st", "92nd", "93rd", "94th", "95th", "96th", "97th", "98th", "99th", "100th", "101st", "102nd", "103rd", "104th", "105th", "106th", "107th", "108th", "109th", "110th", "111th", "112th", "113th", "114th", "115th", "116th", "117th", "118th", "119th", "120th", "121st", 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EDITORIAL RUBRIC

NANCY FREEMAN has rubrics for everything from editorial writing to book reviews to feature and news writing. The detailed rubrics make it easy to assign points for specific actions making the highest possible score 99 points, a reminder, Freeman says, "that no story is perfect and no paper is perfect." While low-performing writers could receive a zero, it's more likely they would receive a score around a 45, based on receiving at least five points for each of nine criteria.

The objectives are specific by themselves and, together with the criteria, leave little room for subjectivity in the points. For example, to evaluate a lead, to award the full 11 points requires that the lead was "original and gets the readers' attention." In addition, the lead would have to be appropriate to the story, have to focus on the nature of the problem being discussed, have a relevant topic and be written in third person. Such a rubric would be good not only for teacher evaluation of the story but for peer evaluation.

OBJECTIVES	EXEMPLARY (10-11 PTS.)	AT OR ABOVE AVERAGE 8-9 PTS.	AT OR BELOW AVERAGE 6-7 PTS.	LOW PERFORMANCE (5 PTS. OR LESS)	POINTS
Effective and appropriate lead	Lead is original and gets the readers' attention; appropriate to the story; focuses on the nature of the problem being discussed; stance is clear from first paragraph; topic is relevant Written in third person	Lead is appropriate to story and fairly effective at getting attention; shows some signs of originality; stance may not be as clearly evident; topic is relevant	Lead is adequate but not extremely catchy or original; stance of the writer is unclear; topic may be overused or not as relevant	Lead is neither original and catchy; is boring overused or trite, or is inappropriate to story; stance is unclear; topic may impact only a few in our audience	
Opinion is grounded in solid research	Evidence of reporter being well informed on the topic; gives solid background on topic; addresses and diffuses opponents' concerns, if appropriate	Writer appears fairly well informed on topic, but background may not be as thorough or may not address majority of opponents' concerns	Not enough background info; little credence given to opponents' concerns	Little or no background info or evidence of being well-informed on topic	
Arguments are well-developed and logical	Contains at least three different but logical arguments for the stated opinion; arguments are aimed at the intended audience; each argument is carefully developed with logical facts, anecdotes or statistics	Contains a least three arguments but only two seem distinct and logical; arguments may not be as clearly aimed at intended audience; each argument may not be as well developed with logical facts or anecdotes	Contains only one really valid reason for the opinion given with perhaps some less valid ones; or audience is unclear; or arguments may not be as well-developed	Opinion is confusing; no valid reasons for the stated opinion	
Effective Organization and Flow (deals with structure)	Story is strongly organized with clear transitions and logical connections that create a sense of being tightly woven together; conclusion offers a clear call to action, proposed solution or final statement	Story is organized and most transitions and connections are clear, but either organization is somewhat lacking or the sense of flow is somewhat abrupt; conclusion may not offer a clear statement	Story lacks strong organization; jumps around too much or lacks effective transitions; not in logical order; ending may not offer a clear statement	Story is choppy or incohesive; organization is unclear; few effective transitions; ending does not offer a clear statement	
Clear Focus and Unity (deals with content)	Focus of story is clear; nothing detracts from primary focus; everything contributes to overall theme	Focus is fairly clear but one or two things on the story detract from the primary focus	Story lacks strong sense of unity and focus; several things seem to detract from focus	No clear focus; story is rambling and awkward	
Interesting and Effective Writing Style	Writing is strong and effective with a clear voice and a variety of sentence structures; piece is tightly written; strong and effective word choice	Writing is adequate but not extremely compelling or original; may be wordy or voice may be unclear; diction may not be as vivid or sophisticated	Writing is rather bland; has no clear voice and or sense of originality; is wordy or redundant; or diction &/or sentence structure may be repetitive	Writing lacks a clear voice and original style	
Correct use of journalism style	NO errors in journalism style (quotes, dates, scores, numbers, money, percents, time, commas, etc.); Short paragraphs; quotes stand alone	Has few (one or two in most stories) errors in journalism style; or may have non-journalistic paragraph structure	Has several errors in journalism style or non-journalistic paragraph structure	Has many errors in journalism style and/or non-journalistic paragraph structure	
Grammar and Spelling	Story is well edited and spell checked; NO errors, including the proper spelling of all names	Story is spell checked and all names are correct; has a few grammatical errors	Story is spell checked and all names are correct; has several grammatical errors	Names are misspelled or spell check was not run; or has many grammatical errors	
Story is properly formatted and saved	Saved as an RTF; No tabs at the beginning of graphs (just a return at the end of the preceding paragraph); Placed in the proper month of the proper editor's folder; Hard copy placed in the adviser's mailbox	Missed one of the four criteria	Missed two of the four criteria	Missed at least three of the criteria	
TOTAL POINTS					

COMMENTS

vary from one type of story to the next, but it was necessary in some form for all.

On the other hand, some categories apply only to certain types of stories. Specialized stories, such as news, features and sports, needed a category entitled Adequate Use of Primary Sources because these are stories that are strongly based on reporting and interviewing skills, but it would make no sense to include that category in a rubric for movie reviews or personal columns, which are based upon one's own opinions and experiences.

I found that all stories required categories that covered effective organization and flow (clarity of story structure), clear focus (unity of content), writing style (covering voice and diction), journalism style, grammar and mechanics and formatting of final product. Every teacher will have to determine what categories to use and how to weight them as he or she creates rubrics.

Next, I had to determine what would qualify as exemplary work in each of those

categories. Where was I really setting the bar? How high did I really want the students to jump and was I communicating that to them clearly? This was harder than I thought, but in some ways easier as well.

I decided to set the exemplary bar high. It is difficult for new students to get that mark in every category. I wanted to reserve the highest mark for the best story by my most sophisticated writers. But a student can miss the exemplary mark in a few categories and still get an A on a story, a factor that makes it a little easier to keep the expectation high for each category. Also, students have other opportunities to earn points.

On my rubrics, the highest a student can get in a category is an 11, which seldom happens and the lowest he or she can get is a 5, which also seldom happens. I decided when I created the rubric to avoid awarding any points lower than 5 because I would never give a student anything lower than a 50 percent on a story that was original work and



YEARBOOK WRITING RUBRIC

Deadline # _____ Name _____

		O	1	2	3	4	PTS
LEAD	KEY THOUGHT	No key thought		Did not appear in the first seven words		Key thought is in the first seven words	
	NUMBER OF WORDS	Information is incomplete		More than 35 words; too much information		35 words or less; information is complete	
	NUMBER OF SENTENCES	Incomplete/run-on sentence		More than one sentence		One sentence	
BODY	AP STYLE	5 errors	3	2 errors	1	No errors	
	SPELLING	5 errors	3	2 errors	1	No errors	
	PUNCTUATION	5 errors	3	2 errors	1	No errors	
	GRAMMAR	5 errors	3	2 errors	1	No errors	
	ORGANIZATION	Facts are confusing and in no particular order		Some facts are out of order		Facts are presented in descending order of importance	
	TRANSITIONS	No transitions used; writing is choppy		Writing is somewhat choppy		Writing flows easily	
INFO GATHERING	PRIMARY SOURCE #1	It is apparent no interview was conducted		Interview techniques obvious		Sources used to support the story	
	PRIMARY SOURCE #2	No interview was conducted		Interview techniques obvious; i.e. "when asked" is used		Source is used to support the story	
	QUOTES	Incorrectly punctuated				All quotations are correctly punctuated	
		Fabricated				Collected during a legitimate interview	
		Irrelevant		Relevant but add nothing to the story		Colorful and relevant	
	SECONDARY SOURCES	4 or more quotes	3	2 quotes	1	No quotes from a secondary source	
		Secondary sources not attributed		Secondary source is incorrectly attributed		Secondary source is attributed correctly	
OPINION		Some opinion is expressed without attribution				All opinion is expressed in a direct or indirect quote	
BALANCE		Only one side presented		One side favored		Both sides equally represented	
		Who? is not answered				Who? is answered	
		What? is not answered				What? is answered	
		When? is not answered				When? is answered	
		Where? is not answered				Where? is answered	
		Why? is not answered				Why? is answered	
		How? is not answered				How? is answered	
TRUTH		Significant error in fact		Some facts are not correct		All facts are correct	
TOTAL POINTS							

BETSY K. AHLERSMEYER, journalism instructor at University Schools in Muncie, Ind. said she uses these rubrics for grading. "Once their work has been graded, it is corrected for publication based on the rubric results and peer editing. She has detailed rubrics for photography, layout and writing. A student graded using this sample rubric for yearbook writing could receive a maximum of 100 points and a minimum of zero.

Criteria, particularly dealing with grammar, spelling, punctuation and style are specific, leaving little room for interpretation. While slightly more subjective depending on who is grading the story, "balance" and "truth" gets to the crux of the story, dealing with ethical and journalistic integrity issues as well as with mechanics.

was turned in on time. My 99-point rubric is a reminder to both my students and to myself that no story is perfect and no paper is perfect. I always want them to think that they should try a little harder to improve.

Deciding what qualifies as an exemplary and poor in each category was fairly easy, and explaining the high and the low end of these rubrics is always the clearest. As in most cases in life, the middle ground is always a bit trickier to define. Each semester now, I tweak the rubrics a bit as I refine my expectations clarify what qualifies as excellence.

Once created, having these rubrics has simplified many areas of my life as a teacher. I use them to teach a concept like the various types of review writing along with model stories. We look at a model for a story. Then we "grade" it according to the rubric. We discuss the techniques the writer uses and whether the story fits into the parameters set out. Having a rubric in their hands gives new writers specific standards to comprehend and a guide to fol-

low. I also tell them that every story will not fit into a cookie cutter mold, but rubrics still allow great flexibility within certain standards. Now even experienced writers will come in and ask for a rubric for a story that they have not done for a while.

Also, editors use rubrics as they coach writers in story conferences. They circle areas on the rubric that correspond to weaknesses in the story and areas where the story needs to be fleshed out as well as areas where the story is already strong. This is faster than writing everything out by hand, but it still gives writers specific feedback. The process helps to produce stronger, well-developed final drafts.

The specificity of the form also is a great aid in grading. I use it to give quick and easy feedback to students on their final grades on a story. It has definitely reduced the number of hours I spend grading — a result that makes the rubric time worthwhile. And best of all, constructive evaluations help students improve their journalism skills. ■