This Week’s Focus:
Turning observations into stories

Last week, we worked to hone students’ observational skills. They can then use those skills as an information-gathering technique to make their narrative writing more interesting. But observation on its own isn't necessarily journalism; however, it can lead to some great story ideas.

Just as a reminder, here's the example of an observation I wrote several years ago in our school’s media center computer lab. From those observations, I generated this list of journalistic questions based on that observation. You’ll note that each of those questions could serve as a possible story idea or angle. An angle, after all, is defined as the journalistic question you want readers to think about a specific topic.

THE LESSON: TURN OBSERVATIONS INTO ANGLES

Last week’s activity, as you may recall, was to have your students be a “fly on the wall” to practice their observational skills. For this week’s activity, see if your students can do what I did — craft several potential journalistic questions based on those observations. Then have them pick their best one and try to further develop the angle. What students could they interview who might be affected by that angle? What experts? What research could they conduct to add credibility and timeliness to the story?

New C:JET issue on the way

Winter issue features several articles with direct ties to JEA curriculum, including this one.

Media Literacy: Trust
Chris Waugaman, MJE, says, in a time of artificial intelligence, trust remains the guiding principle for coverage.

Reporting: Extraordinary Stories
Veteran journalism adviser Phillip Caston, CJE, states what should be obvious: Every school is full of students with extraordinary stories. It’s up to student journalists to uncover the details, details, details. | By Kate Plows, CJE

Writing: Courage and Curiosity
Bobby Hawthorne offers some advice when it comes to teaching writing: Lighten up. Make it fun. Focus on real, relatable people. | By Katrina Berry-Ivy

Yearbook: The End
It’s clear what should be on the title page of a yearbook. But what should be on the last page of the yearbook? Yearbook advisers from across the country share their ideas.

FIND IT AT JEA.ORG
Managing Equipment and Collaborating with Others

Description
During this lesson, students will address the question, “If I were in charge of the photography section of a publications lab, what would the photo gathering process look like?” Students will see examples and evaluate the positives and negatives of different systems for planning photography, communicating with writers, working with the Maestro process and checking equipment out and in.

Objectives
• Students will think critically about what an equipment checkout policy needs to address.
• Students will learn how to work with a writer to develop specific needs and ideas when it comes to planning photos.

The link
The link to the full lesson is HERE. NOTE: This lesson is available free to everyone during the dates listed at the top of this page. Want to have access all the time? If you’re not a member yet, consider joining JEA today for access to all of the resources.

You’ve Got Style

Suggestions from Cindy*

TIME, DATE, PLACE

Use that order most of the time if a sentence includes all three elements.

Example
NFL football kicks off at 7:20 p.m. Sept. 7 in Arrowhead Stadium.

Note
Don't insert a comma between the time and date.

* Style pro Cindy Horchem, CJE, is a retired adviser and the current JEA business and projects coordinator.