This Week's Focus: Planning Future Coverage

I'm a big proponent of working smarter, not harder. To that end, I have my students submit enterprise stories and projects each semester. The enterprise is something that won't be published until the following semester, so the projects give students a chance to create an archive of material from which editors can select throughout the year. These projects range from in-depth, angle-based stories to detailed, full-spread graphics to multimedia offerings.

THE LESSON: CREATE A PROJECT PROPOSAL

The challenge for enterprise projects is to find story ideas that will be timely weeks or even months from now. Students should start by looking at a calendar to see what events may be happening in the next semester. Prom? Spring break? Graduation? Research can also play a role (see gathering data lesson at right). For example, what new data has emerged regarding gas prices or college admission rates? From there, students need to develop a journalistic question relating to their topic of choice, something for readers to think *about*.

For example, while many students usually go somewhere exotic for spring break, higher gas prices can make that trip more expensive. How are students and their families adjusting their plans to accommodate for those higher prices? In Issue #9, I provided a blank story proposal form. Here's now a completed proposal form to show you what I look for. I encourage you to have your students make their own proposals.

FIND IT AT JEA.ORG
Gathering Data

Description
In this lesson, students become more familiar with data journalism. This lesson follows the "Data in scholastic and professional journalism" lesson and introduces students to main sources of big data on the web. Students will also explore web-based tools for gathering data.

Objectives
- Students will identify sources of big data on the web.
- Students will use free web tools to gather web data that is not already in a table format.
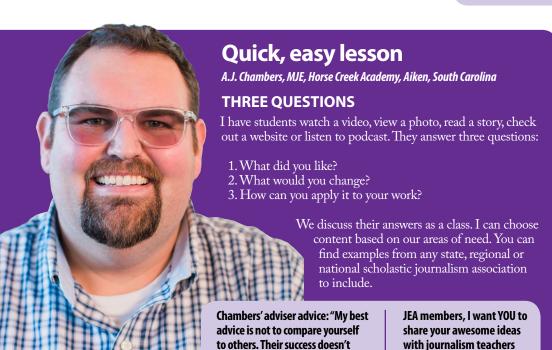- Students will create their own "how to" guides for using data scraping tools.

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.

CLICK HERE TO JOIN JEA NOW

Quick, easy lesson

A.J. Chambers, MJE, Horse Creek Academy, Aiken, South Carolina

THREE QUESTIONS

I have students watch a video, view a photo, read a story, check out a website or listen to podcast. They answer three questions:

1. What did you like?
2. What would you change?
3. How can you apply it to your work?

We discuss their answers as a class. I can choose content based on our areas of need. You can find examples from any state, regional or national scholastic journalism association to include.

Chambers' adviser advice: "My best advice is not to compare yourself to others. Their success doesn't equal your failure. Instead, build relationships with other advisers and find a good mentor."

JEA members, I want YOU to share your awesome ideas with journalism teachers around the country. Fill out this GOOGLE FORM to be a part of this newsletter.

You've Got Style

Suggestions from Cindy*

TOWARD AND BACKWARD

AP style says: toward not towards.

Also, you won't find it in the stylebook, but backward is preferred to backwards.

As an adjective, backward is the only option. As an adverb, either can work, but backward is preferred in American English and backwards is preferred in British English. That means the easy answer for writers in America is to always choose backward … along with upward, skyward, etc.

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