

## This Week's Focus: Cutlines 101

The words “caption” and “cutline” are often used interchangeably. Technically, though, there is a difference. Captions are the little “headlines” over the cutlines. Cutlines, then, are the words (under the caption, if there is one) describing the photograph or illustration.

Regardless of what you call them, captions/cutlines are some of the most important copy in your publication. According to [Poytner Institute](#), eye tracking studies show readers spend a lot of time reading them. However, many student journalists still tend to treat cutlines as an afterthought.

### THE LESSON: PRACTICE WRITING CAPTIONS/CUTLINES

To help my student journalists write better cutlines, I have them practice in small groups. Full disclosure, for this exercise, we do something terribly unjournalistic: We make up information. That being said, the point of the activity is to help strengthen students' understanding of basic AP Style cutline-writing structure (see the JEA lesson at right for more).

To start, I provide students with a handful of journalistic photos. You can grab them from anywhere, but [here's a link to a Google Doc with some prominent journalism news organizations' photo galleries](#). Without benefit of the original cutline, students try to write an AP Style cutline for as many photos as they can. Students can be as creative as they want, but when they share with the rest of the class, the cutline should meet the guidelines. As they read, I critique each cutline to help reinforce those cutline-writing skills.

### FIND IT AT JEA.ORG

## Caption Writing and Headlining Photos

### Description

In this lesson, students will discuss the importance of including a caption for each photo included in a publication. Then, students will learn about AP Style for writing captions and headlines for photos as well as how to expand photo captions for traditional yearbook photo captions. They will finish the lesson by practicing writing their own captions and headlines to go along with photos.

### Objectives

- Students will learn about AP Style for writing captions and headlining photos.
- Students will understand the structure of captions for various publications.

### 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.



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## Get curriculum help

JEA to offer in-person sessions in Kansas City with curriculum expert

Are you having trouble with your curriculum? Are you struggling to create a meaningful scope and sequence? Do you even know where to start? We can help. JEA curriculum pro Meag Abo, CJE, will be at the Spring JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention in Kansas City to offer individual, personalized consultations April 4 and 5 for advisers in half-hour or one-hour increments.

### MEET THE EXPERT

**Meag Abo, CJE, is the media adviser at Bryant (Arkansas) Junior High School, advising multiple publications. Her program has earned multiple national awards.**

### How it works

- **Step 1:** Reserve a spot by filling out [THIS GOOGLE FORM](#). Sessions are \$25 per half hour. Sessions are limited, so sign up early.
- **Step 2:** JEA staff will assign you a slot (or slots) based on availability and when you plan to attend the convention.
- **Step 3:** Show up for your meeting (location to be determined), bring your questions and go!

## You've Got Style

Suggestions from Cindy\*

### MISSPELLINGS PART 2

Here are a more words that you can find in the AP Stylebook that are listed to help users with spelling. In some cases, the listing is the AP preference and not the only way it can be spelled.

<i>easygoing</i>	<i>gobbledygook</i>
<i>eerie</i>	<i>goodbye</i>
<i>eyewitness</i>	<i>grammar</i>
<i>Ferris wheel</i>	<i>Halloween</i>
<i>flip-flop</i>	<i>hands-free</i>
<i>fluorescent</i>	<i>health care</i>

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