

This Week's Focus: Selecting Leaders

Selecting leaders is one of the most difficult tasks I complete each year because, while there are students who are excited about their editorial roles, inevitably there also are students who are less excited because they didn't get their first choice. That being said, just as a football team can't function with 11 quarterbacks, it's important to communicate to your students that every position is equally important. In fact, our [staff hierarchy chart](#) is built from the bottom up. By that, I mean those who generate content — reporters, photographers, graphic designers, etc. — are the most important members of our staff. They are the ones whose bylines most often show up online or in print. Editors, including management members, sit below those content producers. Those editors are there primarily to provide support for those who generate content and help them shine.

FIND IT AT JEA.ORG:

Creating a leadership commitment contract

Description

The commitment contract leaves no secrets among the leaders, their parents and the adviser. This lesson spells out expectations about what being a leader will entail. The lesson also includes a discipline policy, job descriptions, time commitment and norms. By the end of this lesson, leaders and their parents will know what to expect in terms of the jobs they have accepted.

Objectives

- Students will understand the commitment and expectations of being a leader.
- Students will understand the roles of each leader to create a functional team.
- Students will participate in a discussion regarding their role on the leadership team.

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. If you're not a member yet, consider joining JEA today for access to all of the resources.



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Team Builder

Michael Reeves, MJE, James Bowie High School, Austin, Texas

FUN PLAY-DOH HEADLINE-WRITING GAME

We start with 25 to 30 Play-Doh containers in a variety of colors. Then, my go-to is the [School Newspapers Online Best of SNO website](#), where I find 20 or so funny headlines around which I think students could create a [rebus-style](#) design. I type and print them so I can cut them each into their own strip.

In groups of three to four, students choose randomly from the headlines. They have 15 to 20 minutes to make their design.

They can create logos and any graphics they want, but they can't use letters or numbers to spell anything out. The more literal students are, the better this game works. Colors matter too. It's often the case that the puzzle is a series of pieces that link together. When they're done, the judges (you can decide who) spend about three to four minutes

at each station to write a headline based on what they see. Once they write them down, students share the actual headlines, and we compare how close the judges came. I give out prizes for the group whose design and the judges' guess were the closest.

There are lots of ways to make this into a lesson on headline writing, but, in general, we just have fun these days. It's team building, working together and having a laugh while we eat cookies and pretend we're in third grade again.



You've Got Style

Suggestions from Cindy*

SPELLING HELP

Here are 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.

vendor
vice versa
voicemail
wacky
wastebasket
weak-kneed
well-being
wherever
wholehearted
wrongdoing
zigzag
zip line

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