**Rules for Writing Photo Captions**

A caption is the block of text that accompanies a photo in a print or online form.

There are three parts of a caption:

1. In the first sentence, explain what is happening in the photo in present tense. Answer the 5 Ws.
2. The second sentence is often past tense and gives background information about the photo or the situation. The focus should be on giving interesting information to readers and telling a story.
3. The third sentence should give a quote from a witness or someone who was involved in the activity.

Most **newspapers** follow guidelines “a” and “b”

**Online** captions will sometimes mimic newspapers but often be shorter (“a” only)

When it comes to **yearbook**, many different types of captions exist.

*Identification* captions only list the names of the individuals in the photo

*Summary* captions generally follow guideline “A”

*Expanded* captions follow guidelines “A” and “B”

*Quote* captions follow guidelines “A,” “B” and “C”



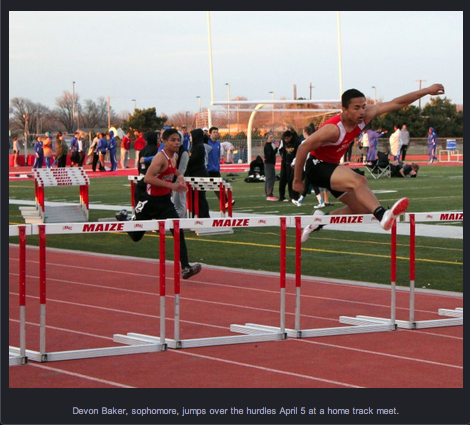
Other tips:

* DO identify everyone fully by first name, last name, year in school, or some other identifying information (unless the group is very large)
* DO NOT state the obvious
* DO NOT write question captions or use the word “pictured.”
* Some newspapers and yearbooks also headline their photos with a 1-3 word headline prior to the caption.

**Evaluate these sample captions. *What do you like? What can be improved? Is there a venue (newspaper, yearbook, etc?) in which the captions work well?***









***Use the information below to write a traditional three-sentence yearbook caption.***

*Note: The sample information is not necessarily “correct” in this case, but it is generally the photographer’s job to collect information to facilitate writing captions.*



Who: Hayes High School’s winter guard

What: practice

Where: auxiliary gymnasium at Hayes

Why: to prepare for upcoming competition  
When: Tuesday, November 19

Write an expanded yearbook caption with quote:



Who: voters in Ventura County

What: watch the television monitor

Where: Ventura County Government Center

Why: to see results as they get tabulated  
When: November 6 (election night)

Write a newspaper caption:

*(Photos by: Bushra Ghafoor - R.B. Hayes High School; Aysen Tan - Foothill Dragon Press)*