

EVALUATION TOOLS

This section contains complete sets of three different kinds of evaluation tools that you and your staff can use. The rubrics, intended mainly for use by advisers and editors, set forth expectations for exceptional, commendable and adequate work on a specific project, as well as identifying traits of work with some and little or no evidence of achievement. Next, you'll find forms intended for peer review. Designed on a half sheet, these are meant to facilitate quick discussions among peers so that staffers can help each other raise the bar. The third set of checklists is meant for self-evaluation, so that students can identify weaknesses in their work and make changes before passing it on to an editor. Some staffs use all three types of assessment in their processes, others may choose to use one kind of form consistently.

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COPY/FEATURE WRITING

Rubric (Page 210 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student writing using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL story exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The lead compels the reader to look at the story because it is anecdotal, shocking, surprising or emotional.
- The conclusion ties to the beginning, uses a summary quote or just stops.
- Reported stories are written in third person, past tense while speciality stories might be in first person, present tense.
- The story, written in active voice, simple sentences and short paragraphs, makes every word count.
- Strong quotes carry the story forward, are properly attributed and do not repeat previous information.
- The story is organized to flow logically, through the use of transitions, and not necessarily chronologically.
- Picture-painting verbs have been used.
- The story is specific and has been fact checked.
- There are no style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.
- Information in the story answers all of the readers' questions.
- Writing avoids expressing the writer's opinion.
- Writing compels the reader to become involved and continue reading.

A COMMENDABLE story exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The lead emphasizes the most important aspect of the story.
- The conclusion ties to the beginning, uses a summary quote or just stops.
- Organization of the story flows smoothly and logically but not necessary chronologically.
- Picture-painting verbs have been used.
- There are no style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.
- Information in the story answers all of the readers' questions.
- Quotes propel the story forward and are properly attributed.
- The story, written in active voice, simple sentences and short paragraphs, makes every word count.
- Writer avoids expressing his/her opinion.
- Reporting copy is written in third person and past tense.
- The story has been fact checked.
- Writing compels the reader to become involved and continue reading.

An ADEQUATE story exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The lead emphasizes the most important aspect of the story.
- Some opinion is expressed in the conclusion.
- Reporting copy is written in third person and past tense.
- Organization of the story has a beginning, middle and end but lacks flow.
- Picture-painting verbs have been used.
- Writing becomes wordy and often in passive voice.
- Quotes are properly attributed, but don't always propel the story forward.
- There are limited style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.
- Some questions may be left unanswered.
- Writer generally avoids expressing his/her opinion.
- Not all of the facts in the story have been checked.
- Writing does not motivate the reader to continue.

A story WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- The lead introduces the story.
- The conclusion may express opinion, predict or speculate.
- Story lacks discernable organization.
- Writing becomes wordy and scope of coverage is limited.
- Inconsistencies in person and tense may appear.
- Quotes, when used, may not be accurate or attributed.
- Verbs are passive in voice and bland.
- Fact checking is not evident.
- There may be errors in style, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- May leave the reader with unanswered questions.
- Writer's opinion is expressed.
- There is little in the story to compel the reader to continue.

A story WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- The story lacks discernible organization.
- Inconsistencies in person and tense appear.
- Does little to inform the reader about the topic or event and leaves reader with many questions.
- Writing becomes wordy and scope of coverage is limited.
- Verbs are passive in voice and bland.
- Fact checking is not evident.
- Errors in style, spelling, grammar and punctuation are evident.
- No quotes are used.
- Writer's opinion is overtly expressed.
- There is little in the story to compel the reader to read on.

HEADLINE PACKAGE

Rubric (Page 212 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student headlines using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL headline package exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The primary headline effectively grabs the readers' attention verbally through devices like rhyming, alliteration, puns, play on words, etc.
- The primary headline establishes a strong visual/verbal connection between it and the dominant photo.
- The secondary headline clearly identifies and further defines the content of the spread.
- The headline package uses colorful, active verbs and active voice.
- The headline package is written in present tense.
- The primary headline avoids the use of a, an and the.
- The headline package reflects the mood of the spread whether it is playful, serious, informative, etc.
- The design is consistent with the style of the section and attracts the eye while allowing for easy readability.

A COMMENDABLE headline package exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The primary headline grabs the readers' attention verbally through devices like rhyming, alliteration, puns, play on words, etc.
- The primary headline establishes a visual/verbal connection between it and the dominant photo.
- The secondary headline identifies and further defines the content of the spread.
- The headline package generally uses colorful, active verbs and active voice.
- The headline package is written in present tense.
- The primary headline usually avoids the use of a, an and the.
- The headline package reflects the mood of the spread whether it is playful, serious, informative, etc.
- The design is consistent with the style of the section and attracts readers to the copy.

An ADEQUATE headline package exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The primary headline summarizes the spread rather than grabbing the readers' attention.
- The primary headline establishes a weak visual/verbal connection between it and the dominant photo.
- The secondary headline identifies and further defines the content of the spread.
- The headline package uses some action verbs and active voice.
- The headline package is written in present tense.
- The primary headline avoids the use of a, an and the.
- The headline package may reflect the mood of the spread whether it is playful, serious, informative, etc.
- The design is consistent with the style of the section and is readable.

A headline package WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- The primary headline does little to draw the reader in.
- The primary headline establishes a questionable visual/verbal connection between it and the dominant photo.
- The secondary headline does little to identify and further define the content of the spread.
- The headline package uses state of being verbs and/or passive voice.
- The headline package may be written in present tense.
- The primary headline may use a, an and the.
- There may be problems with consistency in style and/or readability.

A headline package WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- The primary headline is a label headline.
- There is not a visual/verbal link.
- The secondary headline does little to further define the spread or is not included.
- Little care is given to active voice and tense may be inconsistent.
- The primary headline may use a, an and the.
- There are problems with both consistency in style and readability.

CAPTION WRITING

Rubric (Page 214 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess captions using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL caption exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Captions are written in active voice with picture-painting verbs.
- Storytelling captions include five parts — the lead in connecting the caption and the photo, the first sentence in active voice and present tense describing the action in the photo, the second sentence in past tense describing the reaction to what is happening in the photo, a direct quote from someone in the photo or from an observer talking about the action in the photo and quote attribution.
- Photo credits are provided for each photo.
- Captions identify all faces by first and last name except for candid photos with more than seven subjects.
- Captions use a variety of beginnings and avoid starting with a name.
- Sports captions identify opposing players by jersey number and name.
- Caption starters tell the reader where to begin reading and link the caption to the photo.
- Captions do not state the obvious from the photo and do provide information that is fresh and meaningful.
- Captions are written objectively.
- Group picture captions use first and last names, begin with Front or Bottom Row and end with Top or Back Row, avoiding left to right references.
- There are no style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.

A COMMENDABLE caption exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Captions are at least two sentences long. The first sentence is written in present tense and explains the action in the picture. The second sentence is written in past tense and gives the reaction to what was happening in the photo.
- Photo credits are provided for each photo.
- Captions identify all faces by first and last name except for candid photos with more than seven subjects.
- Captions use a variety of beginnings and avoid starting with a name.
- Sports captions identify opposing players by jersey number and name.
- Caption starters tell the reader where to begin reading and link the caption to the photo.
- Captions do not state the obvious from the photo and provide information that is fresh and meaningful.
- Captions are written objectively.
- Group picture captions use first and last names, begin with Front or Bottom Row and end with Top or Back Row, avoiding left to right references.
- There are no style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.

An ADEQUATE caption exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Captions are at least two sentences long.
- Photo credits are provided for each photo.
- Captions identify all faces by first and last name except for candid photos with more than seven subjects.
- Names sometimes appear as caption starters.
- Sports captions identify opposing players by team name or general statement.
- Caption starters tell the reader where to begin reading.
- Captions do not state the obvious from the photo.
- Some opinion is expressed in the caption.
- Group picture captions may use only first initial and last name to identify members and row references may be unclear.
- There may be some style, spelling, punctuation or grammar errors.

A caption WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Captions may be two sentences long.
- No photo credits are given.
- Faces are not identified individually.
- All captions have the same beginning.
- Sports captions identify opposing players by team name or general statement.
- There are no caption starters.
- Captions provide information that is obvious from the photo.
- Some opinion is expressed in the caption.
- An alphabetical listing is used with group pictures.
- Style, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are evident.

A caption WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Captions may be one sentence or incomplete sentence.
- No photo credits are given.
- Sports captions do not identify opposing players.
- There are no caption starters.
- Captions do little to inform the reader about the photo.
- Writer's opinion in captions is not uncommon.
- No identification for group pictures.
- Style, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are common.

COLUMN DESIGN

Rubric (Page 216 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student designs using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in columns and elements fit exactly into the columns while following a horizontal eyeline.
- The design is anchored on all four margins.
- White space is to the outside of the layout.
- The dominant, placed near the center, is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than other elements.
- At least one photo contrasts with the shape of the dominant.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story and the photos are clustered to the center of the spread.
- Captions “touch” each photo they describe or are clustered with clear photo labeling. There is room for two- or three-sentence captions.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Margins — internal and external — are consistent, except for bleed photos.
- Type size and packaging creates a clear hierarchy of content.

A COMMENDABLE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in columns.
- White space is to the outside of the layout.
- The dominant, placed near the center, is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than other elements.
- Every element on the spread fits exactly into columns and may follow a horizontal eyeline.
- The design is anchored on all four margins.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story and the photos are clustered to the center of the spread.
- Captions “touch” each photo they describe or, if clustered, photos are labeled.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Margins — internal and external — are consistent, except for bleed photos.

An ADEQUATE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in columns and elements generally fit the columns while following a horizontal eyeline.
- White space is predominately to the outside of the layout.
- The dominant element is larger than the others and is placed near the center of the spread.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story.
- Captions are near the photos they describe, or they may be clustered.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread, but the headline may not lead effectively into the copy.
- External margins are not maintained. The design is not anchored on all four margins.

A layout WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in columns, but elements may not always fit columns.
- The design is anchored on at least one margin.
- White space may be trapped on the inside of the layout.
- There are inadequate photos to tell the story and/or the photos are randomly placed.
- There may not be a clear dominant; photos may maintain consistent internal margins.
- Captions may be near the photos they describe or grouped together in one spot.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread.
- External margins are not clear.

A layout WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- No apparent column structure or eyeline.
- There's an inadequate number of photos and no one photo is clearly dominant.
- White space is randomly placed on the spread.
- Captions may be sandwiched between photos.
- Copy and headlines are randomly placed.
- Internal and external margins are inconsistent.

GRID DESIGN

Rubric (Page 218 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student designs using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids and elements exactly fill the grids while following a horizontal eyeline.
- The design is anchored on all four margins.
- White space is to the outside of the layout.
- Levels of white space are used to clearly package elements, unify the spread and highlight special content.
- The dominant, placed near the center, is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than other elements.
- At least one photo contrasts with the shape of the dominant.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story which are clustered towards the center of the spread.
- Captions “touch” each photo they describe or are clustered with clear photo labeling. There is room for two- or three-sentence captions.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Margins — internal and external — are consistent, except for bleed photos.
- Type size and packaging creates a clear hierarchy of content.

A COMMENDABLE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids and elements exactly fill the grids while following a horizontal eyeline.
- The design is anchored on all four margins.
- White space is to the outside of the layout.
- Levels of white space are used to clearly package elements, unify the spread and highlight special content.
- The dominant, placed near the center, is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than other elements.
- The design is anchored on all four margins.
- There are nearly adequate photos on the spread, and photos are clustered at the heart of the spread.
- Captions “touch” each photo they describe or, if clustered, photos are labeled.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Margins — internal and external — are consistent, except for bleed photos.

An ADEQUATE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids and most elements fit within the grids. A horizontal eyeline is present on most spreads.
- The design may be anchored on all four margins.
- White space is predominately to the outside of the layout.
- Levels of white space are used inconsistently or without purpose.
- The dominant element is larger than the others and is placed near the center of the spread.
- There are nearly adequate photos on the spread. Captions are near the photos they describe, or they may be clustered.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread, but the headline may not lead effectively into the copy.
- Margins — internal and external — are not consistently maintained.

A layout WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids, but elements frequently do not fit the grids. There may not be a horizontal eyeline.
- White space may be trapped on the inside of the layout.
- The design is anchored on at least one margin.
- There may not be a clear dominant; photos may maintain consistent internal margins.
- There are inadequate photos to tell the story and/or the photos are randomly placed.
- Captions may be near the photos they describe or clustered but the photos in the clustered caption are not labeled.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread, but headlines do not lead effectively into the copy.
- External margins are not clear.

A layout WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- No apparent grid structure or eyeline.
- There is an inadequate number of photos and no one photo is clearly dominant.
- Captions are sandwiched together between photos or are lacking.
- Copy and headlines are randomly placed.
- White space is randomly placed on the spread.
- Internal and external margins are lacking.

GRIDS WITH LAYERED COVERAGE

Rubric (Page 220 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student designs using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids, and elements on the spread fit exactly into grids and follow at least one horizontal eyeline.
- Levels of white space are used to clearly package elements, unify the spread and highlight special content.
- Each mod is designed as a single, cohesive unit. A mod as a whole fits within the grids.
- The dominant is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than the next largest element. It is placed near the center of the spread.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story, and at least one photo contrasts with the dominant.
- Photos are clustered at the heart of the spread or flow logically from or to the dominant, and captions are clearly connected to the photos they describe.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Type size and packaging clarify hierarchy of coverage and maintain consistency with the rest of the section.
- External margins are adequate and consistent, except for bleed photos.
- Graphic elements are consistent and are used with a clear purpose.

A COMMENDABLE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids, and elements on the spread fit in grids and follow an eyeline.
- Levels of white space may be used to clearly package elements, unify the spread and highlight special content.
- Each mod is designed as a single, cohesive unit. A mod as a whole may fit within the grids.
- The dominant is at least two to two-and-a-half times bigger than the next largest element. It is placed near the center of the spread.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story, and at least one photo contrasts with the dominant.
- Photos are clustered at the heart of the spread or flow logically from the dominant, and captions are connected to the photos they describe.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread with a headline leading into the copy.
- Type size and packaging establish hierarchy of coverage and maintain consistency with the rest of the section.
- External margins are adequate and consistent, except for bleed photos.
- Graphic elements are consistent and are generally used with a clear purpose.

An ADEQUATE layout exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids, and elements on the spread fit in the grids.
- Levels of white space are not used with purpose.
- The dominant photo is larger than the others and is placed near the center of the spread. Photos maintain consistent internal margins.
- There are adequate photos to tell the story.
- Photos are clustered at the heart of the spread, and captions connect to the photos they describe.
- Each mod is designed as a single, cohesive unit. Layers of coverage may fit within the grids.
- Copy is to the outside of the spread, but the headline may not lead effectively into the copy.
- Type size and packaging attempt hierarchy of coverage.
- External margins are not consistent.
- Graphic elements may be consistent.

A layout WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Spread is set up in grids, but elements may not always fit grids.
- There may not be a clear dominant; elements may maintain consistent internal margins.
- Mod is attempted, but it is not designed as a single unit.
- Photos are randomly placed and the connection to the caption is unclear.
- There are not adequate photos to tell the story.
- There is no distinguishable pattern for the use of white space.
- Copy and headline are placed with little thought.
- Hierarchy of coverage is unclear.
- External margins are not clear.
- Graphic elements are used without purpose.

A layout WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- No apparent grid design, eyeline or mod.
- Number of photos is inadequate, and no one photo is clearly dominant.
- Captions are sandwiched together between photos or cannot be connected to photos they describe.
- Copy may be placed anywhere on the spread as is the headline.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rubric (Page 222 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess student photography using the following criteria

An EXCEPTIONAL photograph exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The center of interest is in sharp focus.
- Proper levels and a range of tonal contrast have been achieved in photo editing.
- The center of interest fills at least 80 percent of the frame.
- The horizon is not in the center of the photo.
- Consideration has been given to the rule of thirds.
- The photograph reflects the photographer's effort to establish a relationship with the subject or to find a creative way to tell the story.
- Composition techniques (framing, leading lines, unusual angles, depth of field, interesting foreground or background and varied vantage points) have been incorporated into the photograph.
- Emotion and action are so compelling the reader is moved by the image.
- In sports action shots, the ball is included in the photograph when appropriate.
- A special effect may be used to enhance the photograph.
- Lighting plays an important part in creating the mood of the photograph.
- The photograph tells a story and draws the reader to it.

A COMMENDABLE photograph exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The center of interest is focused.
- Proper levels and range of tonal contrast have been achieved.
- The center of interest fills at least 80 percent of the frame.
- The horizon is not in the center of the photo.
- Consideration has been given to the rule of thirds.
- Emphasis is placed on faces and emotion.
- In sports action shots, the ball is included in the photograph when appropriate.
- Composition techniques and varied vantage points are incorporated into the photograph.
- Lighting enhances the image.

An ADEQUATE photograph exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Center of interest is focused.
- Emphasis is on faces and action.
- Consideration has been given to the rule of thirds.
- Composition techniques may be incorporated into the photograph.
- Little work has been done with levels and contrast.
- Horizon is not in the center of the frame.
- Adequate lighting has been used to capture the image.

A photograph WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Center of interest may be in focus.
- Minimal attempt at editing.
- The image is static or posed.
- Most images are shot from eye level.
- Levels and contrast may not be adequate.

A photograph WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- No apparent attempt to focus on faces or the center of interest.
- Image is static.
- Little creativity and effort is evident.

THEME/CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Rubric (Page 223 in the student workbook)

Goal: To assess the theme/concept based on the concepts taught

An EXCEPTIONAL theme or concept exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The theme enhances coverage naturally rather than being contrived and the coverage having to be forced into it.
- The theme/concept is introduced on the front lid along with the name of the book and the year.
- The spine includes a theme/concept element, the name of the book, year, volume number and the name of the school.
- Endsheets carry the theme/concept both verbally and visually.
- Theme/concept is evident on the title page along with the title of the book, year, volume number, school name, address, website and phone number. The school population breakdown may also be included on the title page.
- The opening section develops the theme both verbally and visually and relates it to the school and the specific year.
- Layers of supporting coverage appear from cover to cover to enhance the story of the year and theme development with verbal links.
- Photography on theme-related pages should be of high quality, advancing the theme and contributing to the story of the year.
- Personality of the book created by the theme makes it specific to this year and different from previous years.
- The theme is reflective of the entire school and is not focused on a particular group or area.

A COMMENDABLE theme/concept exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- The theme enhances coverage naturally rather than being contrived and the coverage having to be forced into it.
- The theme/concept is introduced on the front lid along with the name of the book and the year.
- The spine includes a theme/concept element, the name of the book, year, volume number and the name of the school.
- Endsheets carry the theme/concept verbally and visually.
- Theme/concept is evident on the title page along with required information.
- The opening section develops the theme both verbally and visually and relates it to the school.
- Layers of supporting coverage appear in most sections to enhance the story of the year and theme development with verbal links.
- Photography on theme-related pages advances the theme and contributes to the story of the year.
- Personality of the book created by the theme makes it specific to this year.
- The theme is generally reflective of the entire school.

An ADEQUATE theme/concept exhibits all of the following characteristics:

- Theme does not lend itself to the development of stories in each section.
- The theme/concept is introduced on the front lid.
- The spine includes some but not all of the required information.
- Endsheets carry the theme/concept either verbally and visually.
- Theme/concept is evident on the title page but some of the required information is missing.
- The opening section develops the theme visually but the verbal development is vague.
- Layers of supporting coverage appear in some sections to enhance the story of the year and theme development with verbal links.
- Photography on theme-related pages lacks a direct connection to the theme.
- Personality of the book created by the theme could appear in any school's book.
- The theme is limited in scope and may not cover the entire spectrum of the school.

A theme/concept WITH SOME EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Theme does not lend itself to the development of stories in each section.
- The theme/concept is introduced on the front lid.
- The spine includes some but not all of the required information.
- Theme/concept is undeveloped on the endsheets.
- Theme/concept is evident on the title page but some of the required information is missing.
- The opening section may develop the theme visually but the verbal development is vague.
- Little attempt has been made to provide supporting coverage.
- Photography on theme-related pages bears no relation to the theme.
- Personality of the book created by the theme could appear in any school's book.
- The theme is limited in scope and may not cover the entire spectrum of the school.

A theme WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT exhibits the following characteristics:

- Little thought is given to the connection between the theme and coverage.
- Theme/concept is unclear on the front lid of the cover.
- The spine content is missing.
- Theme/concept is undeveloped on the endsheets.
- Title page concept lacks both theme/concept development and required information.
- Theme is not developed in the opening section.
- Little attempt has been made to provide supporting coverage.
- Photography on theme-related pages bears no relation to the theme.
- Theme does not reflect a personality.
- Theme does not lend itself to all-school coverage.

COPY CHECKSHEET

Directions: Exchange stories with a partner and evaluate the story based on this checklist. Cite specifics so the writer can make changes as needed.

- ☐ The first paragraph grabs the readers' attention.
- ☐ The story is written in third person, past tense unless it is theme or specialized copy.
- ☐ Most sentences are written in subject, verb, object order.
- ☐ AP style or staff style has been used.
- ☐ Copy is concise and no unnecessary words are used.
- ☐ Three to five sources with varying viewpoints have been used in the story.
- ☐ Picture-painting, active verbs are used.
- ☐ There is a logical organization and flow to the story.
- ☐ Copy is correct in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- ☐ To answer the readers' questions, detailed quotes have been used and are properly attributed.
- ☐ The conclusion ties to the beginning, ends with a summary quote, or just ends to avoid editorializing.
- ☐ The angle of the story is specific to this school this year.

COPY CHECKSHEET

Directions: Exchange stories with a partner and evaluate the story based on this checklist. Cite specifics so the writer can make changes as needed.

- ☐ The first paragraph grabs the readers' attention.
- ☐ The story is written in third person, past tense unless it is theme or specialized copy.
- ☐ Most sentences are written in subject, verb, object order.
- ☐ AP style or staff style has been used.
- ☐ Copy is concise and no unnecessary words are used.
- ☐ Three to five sources with varying viewpoints have been used in the story.
- ☐ Picture-painting, active verbs are used.
- ☐ There is a logical organization and flow to the story.
- ☐ Copy is correct in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- ☐ To answer the readers' questions, detailed quotes have been used and are properly attributed.
- ☐ The conclusion ties to the beginning, ends with a summary quote, or just ends to avoid editorializing.
- ☐ The angle of the story is specific to this school this year.

HEADLINE CHECKSHEET

Directions: Print your design out and exchange with a partner. Use this checksheet as a guide to critiquing the headline.

- ☐ The main headline is high in interest and reader appeal, hooking the reader.
- ☐ Literary devices and cultural references have been employed to increase reader interest.
- ☐ A secondary headline provides spread-, year- and school-specific details.
- ☐ The headline package serves as a logical introduction to the copy.
- ☐ The headline creates a verbal link to the dominant visual element on the spread.
- ☐ The design of the headline fits the sectional design guidelines.
- ☐ If the headline is not placed above the copy, there's some kind of copy starter to attract the readers' eye.
- ☐ The fonts selected for the headline are easy to read.
- ☐ Headlines for supporting coverage repeat the pattern from the main copy, but are scaled back so it's obvious where the reader should look first, where they read next and which blocks are supporting stories of less importance.

HEADLINE CHECKSHEET

Directions: Print your design out and exchange with a partner. Use this checksheet as a guide to critiquing the headline.

- ☐ The main headline is high in interest and reader appeal, hooking the reader.
- ☐ Literary devices and cultural references have been employed to increase reader interest.
- ☐ A secondary headline provides spread-, year- and school-specific details.
- ☐ The headline package serves as a logical introduction to the copy.
- ☐ The headline creates a verbal link to the dominant visual element on the spread.
- ☐ The design of the headline fits the sectional design guidelines.
- ☐ If the headline is not placed above the copy, there's some kind of copy starter to attract the readers' eye.
- ☐ The fonts selected for the headline are easy to read.
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CAPTION CHECKSHEET

Directions: Read the caption your classmate wrote or use the captions on a current spread. Use this checklist to help evaluate the caption(s).

- ☐ The caption has some sort of starter — introductory phrase, bold face, color, all caps.
- ☐ The first sentence is written in present tense.
- ☐ Subsequent sentences are written in past tense.
- ☐ The caption has at least two sentences.
- ☐ There is variety in the way captions start. Not every caption begins with a name.
- ☐ The caption tells more than what is obvious in the photograph.
- ☐ The writer's opinion is avoided in the caption.
- ☐ The caption uses picture-painting verbs.
- ☐ The caption gives information not already included in the story.
- ☐ Sports opponents are identified by jersey number and name.

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DESIGN PEER CHECKSHEET

Directions: Print your design out and exchange with a partner. Use this checksheet as a guide to critiquing the layout.

- ☐ A dominant element two to two and one-half times larger than other elements is placed near but not exactly in the center.
- ☐ The layout includes adequate pictures to tell the story and one repeats the shape of the dominant.
- ☐ Elements vary in size and shape. At least one shape contrasts with the dominate.
- ☐ Copy is placed to the outside of the design.
- ☐ Captions are placed to the outside near the photos they describe. If cluster captions are used each photo is clearly labeled.
- ☐ Every element fills the width of the column or grid.
- ☐ Eyeline is near but not exactly in the center of the spread.
- ☐ White space is used to package related elements, create consistency or isolate distinct content units.
- ☐ Headline packages make clear the hierarchy of the spread.
- ☐ The overall package reflects the tone of the story.

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PHOTO CHECKSHEET

Directions: You will need to collect the photos and the layout for a spread. Choose the photos for the layout using this checklist as a guide. When you are finished, share your photos, layout and checklist with a classmate to gain additional feedback.

- ☐ Each photo is candid — no photo is posed.
- ☐ Each photo has an obvious center of interest.
- ☐ Every picture can be positioned so the action faces the gutter.
- ☐ No arms, legs and faces are cropped out.
- ☐ Wasted, empty space is eliminated.
- ☐ Objects that distract from the center of interest are avoided.
- ☐ Horizontal photos are cropped for horizontal spaces, and vertical photos are cropped for vertical spaces.
- ☐ The selection of photos includes a variety of subjects engaged in a mix of activities.
- ☐ The photos on the spread reflect the diversity of the student body in age, grade level, gender and ethnicity.
- ☐ Sports photos contain the ball in the frame when the ball is an important part of the game or action.
- ☐ Photos are technically strong — well focused, good contrast, proper levels used.

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- ☐ Photos are technically strong — well focused, good contrast, proper levels used.

THEME/CONCEPT CHECKSHEET

Directions: Evaluate your theme/concept package using this checksheet.

- ☐ The theme/concept appears on the cover, endsheet, title page, opening section, divider pages and closing.
- ☐ The theme/concept is developed visually and verbally on the cover. The cover also includes title of book and year.
- ☐ The theme/concept is specific to the year and relevant to the school.
- ☐ The theme/concept enhances the story of the year rather than being contrived and the story being forced to fit into the theme.
- ☐ Visual theme/concept elements reflect the verbal theme.
- ☐ Theme/concept is evident throughout the book rather than being introduced in the beginning and then forgotten.
- ☐ At least two stories in each section of the book are theme related.
- ☐ Theme is evident in the index.
- ☐ The theme is wrapped up in the closing section.

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PAGE SUBMISSION CHECKSHEET

Directions: Review the pages you have been assigned to check by evaluating the spread with this checksheet.

eDesign

InDesign

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Preflight has been run and corrections made. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | The links and fonts are correctly packaged. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | The correct job number is being used and paperwork has been completed. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | The number of files ready to send reflects the number on the form the staff has said they were sending. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All pages are completed pages and not dummies to fill the deadline. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sectional design guidelines have been followed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Every element fills the width of the column or grid. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Copy has been proofread. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Headline packages follow staff style. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | Hi-res PDFs have been printed and proofed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | Page is PRINT-READY (all proofing completed.) |

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STUDENT CHECKLIST FOR COPY WRITING

Directions: After you have written a block of copy, use this checklist to evaluate your work.

Interviewing

- ☐ Three to five sources, each giving a fresh perspective, are used in the story.
- ☐ Open-ended questions have resulted in quotable material.
- ☐ Information included in the story answers all the readers' questions.
- ☐ Every quote propels the story forward.

Writing/Story Structure

- ☐ On spreads with traditional copy, the headline, photo and first paragraph work together to create a compelling lead for the story.
- ☐ The writing is clear with modifiers placed next to the words they modify.
- ☐ Subject, verb, object order is used most frequently.
- ☐ Reporting stories are written in third person and past tense.
- ☐ The year, name of school and mascot are avoided since we can assume that information because it is in the school's yearbook.
- ☐ Transitions tie the individual points of the story together for a logical flow.
- ☐ Quotes are properly attributed and provide sufficient detail to avoid unanswered questions.
- ☐ The story has been fact checked, grammar and spell checked.
- ☐ Every word counts and the writer deals in specifics rather than generalities to ensure the story relates directly to the school.
- ☐ Editorializing (expressing an opinion) is avoided, especially at the end of stories.
- ☐ AP or the staff style has been followed.

Feature/Sports Writing

- ☐ The story has a specific angle relating directly to the school and the year.
- ☐ It is clear how the team fared in sports stories.
- ☐ The focus of the sports story is the highlight(s) of the season.
- ☐ The story captures the readers' attention by using an anecdotal beginning or the most unusual aspect of the story.
- ☐ In profiles, the reader gets to know the person through the use of direct quotes, physical description, what they say, what they do and how others respond to them.
- ☐ The conclusion ties back to the beginning, ends with a summary quote or the story just ends to avoid editorializing.
- ☐ Dates, scores and other statistics have all been fact checked.