



New Writer's Handbook!

By Holyn Walsh



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Welcome to
Portrait!



01

What to Expect As A New Writer: The First 6 Weeks and Beyond



Week 1



01

You will meet the rest of the staff members, and do icebreakers to learn names

02

You will be randomly assigned to a team and tasked with creating a team name and banner.

03

Portrait Olympics time! You and your team must compete with other teams in fun challenges to win points!

Week 2



01

Our adviser (Harrell) will begin teaching you the laws and regulations concerning high school journalism.

02

During this week you will receive presentations from each editor that will cover their role on staff, the basics of their area, and what to expect when working with them.

03

Returners and editors will begin working on cycle zero during this time.

Training



01

The training period for new staff spans around 6 weeks. Harrell will be your main guide during training, but your editors will come in to help and do small lessons. Editors will be working on the first cycle of the paper, and you may get the opportunity to shadow them as they work.

02

During training you will learn the basics of journalistic writing such as, AP style, interviewing, types of journalistic writing, and the elements of an article. You will also get a more in-depth explanation of the regulations tied to high school journalism.

03

You will produce a small story for our website or instagram at the end of this period.

First Cycle



01

During Cycle 1, you will be expected to produce a full-length article that will be published in the paper.

02

You will be assigned to an editor who will be your mentor. They will check in with you daily during the cycle. Your mentor can help you with interviews, AP style, writing, and anything else you might need. You will periodically shadow your mentor while they write and interview.

03

Congrats!!! You are officially a published staff writer for Portrait!

02

Our Publication



The Paper!

Our paper is typically 16 pages long. It is divided into categories based on types of journalistic writing.

News

News articles usually serve to inform people about an event or organization. An article about club rush could be a news article.

Feature

A feature is an article that primarily focuses on one person. An article about the new principal could be a feature.

Opinion

An opinion piece is an article where the author writes about their thoughts and feelings on a topic. A movie review could be an opinion article.

Sports

This one is pretty self explanatory! Anything that covers sports is considered a sports article. A sports article could also fall under the news or feature categories.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle writing is more fun and serves to entertain the reader. A recipe or a quiz could be a lifestyle article.

We also have a center category, which is an article that spans two pages. Centers are usually features about more serious or pressing topics.


We release a print edition of the paper every month! Usually you get one or two pieces in print and you may be assigned to work with another staff member.

Social Media and Online



Social Media

Social media stories will be posted on our Instagram page. Usually stories that are too small to be published in print, or won't be timely once the paper comes out, go on Instagram. You can write multiple social media articles every cycle.




Make sure to communicate with an online editor when you are working! They are the ones who will edit and post your work



Online

Online articles will be posted on our website. All articles that are published in print should also go online. An advantage to online writing is that our website editor can create interactive infographics and other features to go along with your story. Like social media, website articles mainly consist of breaking news events or topics that won't be timely once the paper comes out.



03

How to Write an Article: The First Steps





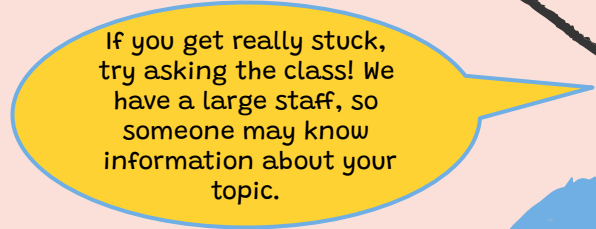
Step 1: Identify The Direction




After you are assigned a topic for your article, you need to form a plan for how you want to tell your story.

Hol's Tips

Let's say your topic is basketball. There are many different directions you can take when writing about this topic. If you have trouble planning your article, talk to an editor or ask around! By meeting with someone who knows about your topic, such as a member of the basketball team, you can figure out where you want to go with your story. Maybe they have an important game coming up that they have been preparing for!



If you get really stuck, try asking the class! We have a large staff, so someone may know information about your topic.









Step 2: Plan your Interviews

After solidifying your theme, you must plan your interviews

Hol's Tips

- Start by identifying some individuals who could give you the information you need for your story to be successful. Let's use the basketball example again! You may want to look at the team roster, the captains, the coaching staff, or maybe even the parents of an athlete.
 - Now, you must write your interview questions. When you write your questions, think of the information you need for your story to be successful. Refrain from asking questions that will receive a simple yes or no response. Write questions that will get you a story. When you are finished with your questions, show them to an Editor in Chief.
 - If you need to talk to an adult such as a teacher or a coach, you must set up an interview. You can do this over email. Your email must consist of a cordial greeting, an introduction to you, a brief summary of what you are writing and what you will be speaking to them about, and times you are available to meet. They may ask to see your interview questions, so make sure they are written prior to reaching out.
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- 



Step 3: Conduct your Interviews

AHHH THE SCARY PART!!!!!!


Hol's Tips

-If you are interviewing a student, politely ask their teacher if you can pull them out of class for an interview. Be respectful regardless of their response- you are interrupting their class time!

-Before asking your questions, ask the interviewee their name, its spelling, their preferred pronouns, and if they are comfortable being interviewed and recorded.

-While interviewing, be sure to listen to your subject. There will be many opportunities to ask follow ups. Never be afraid to ask your interviewee to elaborate on something so you can get a deeper understanding of their story.

-Remember that you are representing the publication when you are interviewing so make us look good!



Step 4: Organize Information

After conducting your interviews, plan your story

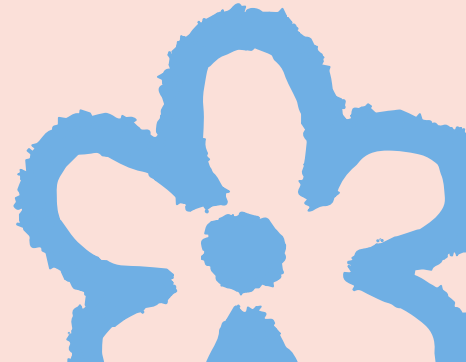
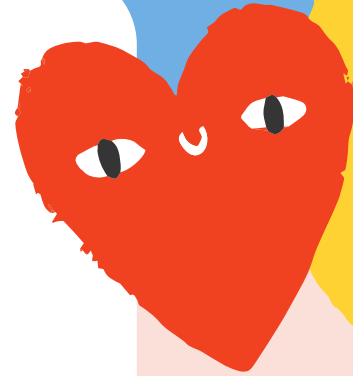
Hol's Tips

When you organize your information, identify the quotes you want to include and highlight key points of information. This will be helpful when you begin writing your story!

Period! Now
you are
ready to
start
writing!

04

The Elements of A Story



The Anatomy Of An Article

The board of Really Cool School has proposed promoting part-time teacher's aide Betty Figgs to a full-time nurse position so the populous school can hire a new teacher.

Lede

Nut Graf

Principal Stella Reeves claimed that Figgs proved her competence and reliability as a nurse, when she filled in for former school nurse Ema Stilton, who tragically passed away in a car crash.

"Most of my job is routine. I distribute prescribed medicine to students and attend to a few with headaches or stomach aches every day," Figgs said. "When something major happens, we call parents or EMS."

Quote

However, Raquelle Simmons and other parents of students with special needs expressed concerns about Figgs's appointment as a school nurse, labeling the decision "short-sighted and dangerous."

"I have a special needs child who is quite fragile," Simmons said. "If he suffers a seizure at school, I want a certified nurse to help him."

Despite these concerns, hiring Figgs would offer benefits. Avoiding an interview process to hire a certified nurse would save money, allowing the school to hire a new teacher. Yvonne Gutierrez, an English teacher at Really Cool School, supports the decision to hire Figgs.

"We need all the help we can get reducing our numbers; the workload is too much, and class sizes have increased by almost 7%," Gutierrez said.

Reeves remains steadfast in her belief that hiring Betty Figgs will benefit the school. She plans to hold a meeting on Thursday, April 4th, with parents to discuss her proposal.

Conclusion

Transition

VOCAB LESSON+HOL TIPS

01

Lede

A lede is the first few sentences in a piece of journalistic writing. Your lede can make or break your story. It is the first thing your readers will see, so it has to capture their attention. (no pressure) Lede writing varies based on the type of article you are writing. In essence, it captures the who, what, when, where, why and how of your story. Ledes can be difficult to write, so if you get stuck, try moving on to the body paragraphs and coming back to the lede later.

02

Nut Graf

A nut graf comes after a lede in an article. The nut graf explains the context and other important details that are relevant to the theme of the story.

03

Quotes and Transitions

Quotes and Transitions make up the body of the story. They may consist of community opinions on your topic, anecdotes that connect to the lead, the impact of the story you are reporting on, and the lasting effects that the topic of your story may have. They could also be indirect quotes, or an introduction to the individual you are quoting.

04

Conclusion

There are many different ways you can end a story. You could end it with a kicker quote, which is a powerful quote that ties the story back to your lede. You could also end the story with a summary of the information regarding your topic, or the implications your topic may have in the future. Like ledes, conclusions can be pretty tricky so ask an editor for help if you are struggling!

Basic Stylistic Laws!


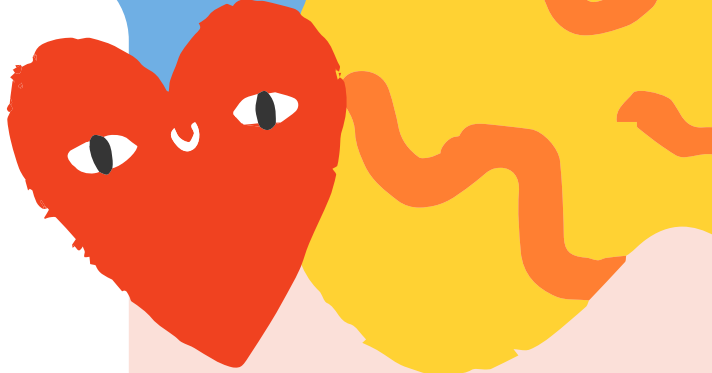
AP style is an English grammar guide for journalists. It can be pretty tricky to remember—even for us editors! Here are some basic AP style rules in case you forget!

- ★ **Always use a person's first and last name when they are introduced in a story. Do not use the first name on a second reference unless subjects in a story share a last name**
- ★ **Numbers one–nine should be spelled out. Use numerals for any numbers larger than 10. Any number above 1,000 should have a comma. A number should not start a sentence.**
- ★ **Never use the % sign. Always spell out percent**
- ★ **Always use numerals for age**
- ★ **Use numerals and a.m. and p.m. for time (ex. 6:45 a.m.)**
- ★ **Use the \$ sign for money. Do not spell out dollars.**
- ★ **In a date, if a month has more than 5 letters- abbreviate it. A date should always be a number. (ex. Sep. 22, May 18)**
- ★ **When introducing a student, add their grade number after their name (ex. Holyn Walsh (12))**
- ★ **A quote should be its own paragraph, and end with ,” Name said.**

If you have an ap style question that isn't answered here, talk to an editor or look up an AP style guide online!

05

Cycle Schedule



Keep in mind this is the ideal schedule for a cycle, but it may be subject to change if something unexpected comes up!

Week 1

Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Brainstorm! Fill out pitch form	Pitch Form deadline	Article Assignments Editor and designer meetings	Article Assignments Editor and designer meetings	Interview Planning Interview Questions Written	Interviews Interview Planning Interview Questions written

Brainstorm

During the brainstorm, the entire staff meets and pitches article ideas for the upcoming issue. You can pitch multiple ideas if you want to, and you do not have to commit to writing the articles you pitched. We must have at least 6 ideas for each section of the paper (except for the center).

Article Request

After the brainstorm, you will fill out the article request form. You must choose an online and a print article if you are not taking photos or designing. You will name the story you want to write, share your ideas for what it will be about, and tell us who you plan to interview for it. You should have a solid idea of what you want to do for your story before filling out the form.

Editor Discussions

After you get your article assignment you will talk to your editor. Their job is to help you figure out the direction you want to take with your story. If you believe there has been a mistake with your assignment, or if you are not interested in the story you have been assigned, tell your editor. You should also talk to your designer to figure out how long your article should be, and what visuals or graphics you may include.

When you are finished with this process:

- ★ Create a document for your story and add it to the folder that corresponds with the page your story is on in the shared google drive.
- ★ Copy and paste a link to your article in the grand plan.



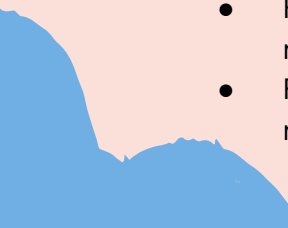
Week 2



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Interviews	Interviews	Interviews should be almost done by today! Photo and Sidebar form Deadline	Rough draft writing	Rough Draft writing


Form deadlines

After conducting interviews:

- Fill out the photo form in google classroom if you need a photo
 - Fill out the sidebar form in google classroom if you need a sidebar (don't forget EinC sign off!)
- 

Interview deadlines

You should have most of your interviews done by Wednesday on week 2. This deadline is not strict, we understand that there are many factors that can interfere with interview times.



Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Rough Draft deadline Editor Checks Meet with your designer and photographer today!	Second Draft Writing	Second Draft Writing	Second draft deadline EinC/Editor Meetings Start final drafts	Final Draft writing EinC/Editor Meetings (If you didn't get to meet Thursday)

Rough draft

Your editor will check your rough drafts this day to see if they are done. If they are, your editor will put a checkmark under the rough draft column in the Grand Plan organization spreadsheet. If they are not, your editor will come talk to you to see if you need any assistance.

Rough draft checklist

- Interviews done
- Lede written
- Quotes selected
- Information organized
- Basic outline completed

-After your rough draft, you should talk to your designer and finalize your plan

-If you asked for a photo, talk to your photographer as well about visuals

Second draft

Your second draft should be a finished copy of your story. When you are finished with your second draft, you will sit down with an editor or EinC and discuss your story. They will make suggestions for how to improve your writing and storytelling.

- Word count met
- Lede complete
- Quotes are strong
- Transitions are clear
- Conclusion written
- Visuals planned

Week 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Final Draft writing	DURING CLASS- Final Draft Writing AFTER SCHOOL- Grind Night	Editor Grind Night + Paper gets finalized	Rest day!! Cycle Review	Distribution! Glows and Grows

Final draft

After you go through your story with your editor, work on adding the changes and edits they suggested. Then, read through your story again to see if there are any mistakes you missed and brainstorm captions for photos, headlines, subheads, and bylines. You should be finished, or close to done with your final draft before grind night. Unless there is a special circumstance, your visuals should also be planned by grind night.

- Changes/edits made
- Visuals planned
- Headline Written
- Subhead written
- Captions written

Grind night

This is when we finalize the paper! Your editor will go through your final draft once more to ensure everything is there, and then you are ready to publish. We also listen to music, play Just Dance, and have a portrait family dinner.

Editor Grind night

Editor grind night takes place after grind night. This is when the editors meet to go through the final copy of the paper to make last minute edits. Non-editors do not attend editor grind night unless they don't have their work done.

Cycle Review


The cycle review is a google form that only Harrell can see. You can use this form to privately report things that you struggled with during the cycle, and concepts you may need re-taught. It is also where you submit your work for grading.

Glows and Grows


After distribution, we will go through the paper and list things that stood out to us, and things that we need to improve on.



THE END



Go be a
writing
star!



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