



South Dakota High School Activities Association Journalism – Newspaper

Contestant # _____

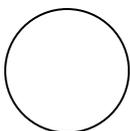
Contest Event _____

Adjudicator:

- **Circle the individual qualities** in each of the numbered characteristics that are descriptive of those exhibited in this Newspaper.
- Place the number in the space for each area which most closely matches the descriptors in the corresponding box.
- Total the scores (whole numbers only-**no half points**).
- Please add your comments and suggestions in the space provided (use back if necessary) and sign the form.

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Design 1-10 | Superior concept in the form of theme throughout the publication 10-9 | Above average concept, but lacks slightly in detail 8-6 | Basic concept is good, but quality is not consistent throughout 5-4 | Basic concept is apparent, but underdeveloped for a high school piece 3-2 | Concept is unacceptable 1 |
| Writing and Editing 1-20 | Editing is superior and finished with a great deal of care and attention to detail. Well written, with a superior level of detail. No grammatical errors 20-17 | Editing is finished with a high level of skill, but lacks a few finishing details or touches. With a little more effort, the work would be outstanding. Well written, with above average level of detail. Few grammatical errors 16-13 | Average editing and technical skills. This is adequate, but could still be improved upon. Average level of detail. Grammatical errors throughout 12-7 | Finished project but it lacks finishing touches or could have been improved upon with more effort. Below average craftsmanship. Below average level of detail. Grammatical errors throughout 6-2 | Editing is unacceptable Written text is unacceptable 1 |
| Coverage 1-30 | Superior degree of coverage exhibited throughout. 30-25 | Above average degree of coverage throughout. 24-20 | Average degree of coverage is present. 19-11 | Newspaper lacks coverage. 10-2 | Weak coverage, and unacceptable 1 |
| Editorial Content 1-20 | Well written, with a superior level of detail. No grammatical errors 20-17 | Well written, with above average level of detail. Few grammatical errors 16-13 | Average level of detail. Grammatical errors throughout 12-7 | Below average level of detail. Grammatical errors throughout 6-2 | Written text is unacceptable 1 |
| Photography 1-10 | Superior level of focus and editing of photograph subject matter, along with superior subject placement in newspaper context 10-9 | Above average level of focus and editing of photograph subject matter, along with above average subject placement in newspaper context 8-6 | Average level of focus and editing of photograph subject matter, along with average subject placement in newspaper context 5-4 | Below average level of focus and editing of photograph subject matter, along with below average subject placement in newspaper context 3-2 | Unacceptable focus, and subject is placed inappropriately in the newspaper context 1 |
| Adjudicator comments and suggestions for improvement | | | | | |

TOTAL POINTS



Signature of Adjudicator

Design:

Overall design

- The design is clean, uncluttered, organized.
- The publication uses modular or nearly modular page makeup throughout. (Modular is characterized by rectangular, four-sided shapes.)
- All elements—text, headlines, photos, graphics and art—are coordinated to balance.
- Screens and rules are not used excessively.
- Design indicates a hierarchy of prominence for content and focuses attention on a major story.
- White space is used effectively and margins are consistent.
- A serif typeface for text is preferred. Typesize is appropriate (not too large, not too small) and attractively leaded (space between lines of type) for easy reading.
- Cutlines exhibit contrast from body text.
- Typeface for headlines is different from the body text and remains fairly consistent throughout the publication (allowing for creativity in special story packages).
- Tombstoned and butting headlines are avoided except when deliberately designed into a story package.
- “Quick read” elements have been used to help readers.
- Page folios contain date, section identification and page number.
- Photos or art do not separate a story and its main headline.
- Layout attracts readers’ attention and exhibits creativity/innovation.
- Design uses consistent, neat spacing between elements, exhibiting attention to detail.

Front page

- A positive first impression sets the stage for inside pages, with a strong center of visual interest.
- The nameplate/flag is uncluttered and attention-getting. It includes the name of the publication, date, volume number, issue number and address, if it does not appear elsewhere.
- A general consistency of design exists, but front pages do not become repetitious or predictable.
- The design strikes a balance between horizontal and vertical story packages.
- Teasers should compliment and not distract the reader from the focus of the dominant element.

Inside pages

- Inside pages are built around a single element, major story, or dominant art element.
- Headline weights are used effectively.
- The design is uncluttered.
- Attention to detail in spacing is evident.
- The natural fold (center spread) is designed as a single unit.
- Editorial/opinion pages occur in every issue and may differ from other pages in the publication to signal a shift from objective news and feature coverage to subjective writing.
- Folios appear on all pages and include publication name, page #s and date.

Writing and Editing:

Basic principles

- Staff follows a consistent style (abbreviations, capitalization, use of numerals, etc.).
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are presented. Accuracy is stressed.
- People are completely identified in a consistent style.
- Paragraphs vary in length but are usually short. Successive paragraphs in a story do not repeat the same words in the beginning.
- Sentences are clear and varied. Journalistic writing style is consistent.
- Attributions are used appropriately. Third person predominates.

Stories in general

- Leads vary in structure and catch the reader’s attention.
- Stories catch the reader’s attention and are not padded with trite comments/content. Stories stick to a central focus. Transitions are evident. Quotes are used effectively. Objectivity is a major goal.
- Active voice dominates.
- Stories reflect sound interviewing techniques.
- Stories stress the “why” and/or “how” element.
- Stories avoid summaries of general circulation material and avoid copying previously published material.

News stories

- Timely.

- Free of editorializing.
- Leads appeal to the reader.
- Future events are part of the story.

Feature stories

- Story topics are varied and original.
- Leads set the tone and focus.
- Quotes enhance the story.
- Stories develop a central idea.
- Anecdotes, when appropriate, add life to stories.

Sports stories

- The how and why of action is emphasized.
- Seasonal coverage follows descending order of importance, avoiding chronological accounts.
- Style is colorful and interesting but contains objective, straight reporting.
- Writing avoids clichés and jargon.
- Columns are not “preachy.”

Headlines & cutlines

- Headlines present useful, specific information, but they also attract the reader’s attention.
- Headlines are in present tense.
- Headlines avoid overuse of the school’s name, abbreviations, repetition of words, split infinitives, adverbs and adjectives separated from verbs and nouns, prepositions separated from objects.
- Varied headline styles are used.
- Headlines fill the allotted space.
- All photos have a cutline with a credit.
- Cutlines have impact. They avoid clichés. The first sentence is in present tense with a possible switch to past tense in subsequent sentences.
- All recognizable people are identified. Use of “above,” “top left,” etc. is avoided.

Coverage:

First and foremost, the newspaper should cover student-oriented events and issues. The staff should strike a balance between past, present and future event coverage. Each school’s staff needs to determine the approach to news coverage that best serves the needs and expectations of its audiences. One staff may concentrate on feature writing, while another may favor straight news or in-depth approaches. Regardless, all news should be timely, local, relevant, adhering to basic news values and news elements (conflict, consequence, self-identification, human interest, timeliness, etc.)

General Coverage

- The publication attempts to reach the whole school community, is understandable to outside readers and emphasizes information of interest and consequence to most students.
- The publication centers on school news, yet seeks to show how other information about the community; regional, national and international events affect students.
- The publication appears lively, entertaining, enterprising and well-balanced.
- Minority groups and minority issues within a school or community are presented.
- Articles appear to be written following thorough reporting. When applicable, at least three sources have been used.
- Content shows diversity of news, news opinion, features and sports and includes advance coverage.
- All content is presented from a student perspective.

News coverage

- A balance of briefs and detailed accounts appear in the publication.
- There is evidence of a variety of news sources.
- Student organizations are covered (government, clubs, activities, etc.).
- Various aspects of on-campus student life—curriculum, interests, “glamour” subjects, controversies— are researched and presented to students.
- Off-campus news—local to international—are researched and presented to students.

Feature coverage

- A variety of features is offered. They are stimulating, interesting, entertaining, timely.

- Personality profiles offer realistic, newsworthy portrayals. Puzzles, jokes, horoscopes, and gossip columns are omitted.
- Polls/surveys emphasize student results and indicate size and range of sampling.
- Staff expands coverage of single subjects and special themes which reflect problems, actions and

Sports coverage

- Content includes competitive team sports, individual sports and leisure activities.
- The publication gives readers information about approaching events, recalls highlights of past events with emphasis on what students do not know and information about opposing teams.
- The publication provides for well-rounded season coverage and refrains from “glamorizing.”
- Coverage is original and includes related interviews, personality profiles, surveys and other feature material.
- Some statistics and summaries are provided. Some briefs exist. Playoff, league and conference results are evident.
- Content may include coverage of collegiate or professional sports of interest to students

Writing:

- **Copy (both traditional and alternative):** A yearbook serves as an historical record of the year. There is no other place where the events and emotions of your school’s year are chronicled so thoroughly. It is impossible to tell the story of the year through photos alone. You must interview, observe, report and write journalistically. Stories need strong themes and angles. They must be descriptive, well researched and unified. In addition, it is not enough to report just what happened—the when, who, what, where. Strong writing reveals the emotions that accompanied the events—the how and why.
- **Headlines:** Students may not read every story, but they generally read every headline. Every story needs a complete and appealing headline that grabs the readers’ attention and pulls them into the story. A main attention-getting headline and secondary explanatory headline package are often effective.

Editorial Content:

Leadership

- The publication expresses concern for the well-being of the school, students, staff and faculty through commentary in editorials and opinion columns.
- The publication expresses concern for the well-being of the community through commentary relevant to student readers in editorials and opinion columns.
- There is evidence of adequate research covering varied aspects of the topic.
- Coverage includes non-school events and issues relevant to students that will help make students more well-informed citizens.
- The publication attempts to cover topics and issues of concern to its main audience.
- Page one contains information that is most significant of the content in the publication.
- The publication provides students with information of immediate and long range effects on students’ lives.

Editorial/opinion content

- Editorials/opinion provide responsible comment on a range of subjects.
- Issues contain at least one editorial based on a timely and important topic covered elsewhere in the publication.
- Editorials reflect thorough research and suggest, when appropriate, solutions.
- Opinion coverage provides useful forums for letters to the editor, guest articles, columns, news analysis, editorial cartoons and photographs.
- A published editorial policy encourages readers to write letters and contribute guest articles and explains how to do so.
- The publication presents reviews of films, records, literature, electronic media, etc. of interest to students.

Professional standards & ethics

- Students follow ethical practices and accepted professional standards and adhere to press law in all aspects.
- Students use accepted journalistic form and style. Any deviation is made because it is appropriate and valuable to readers.
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are covered. Accuracy is stressed.
- The newspaper reflects maturity and responsibility and leads student discussion.
- The publication is professional and journalistic in its approach to coverage, writing and leadership.

Photography:

- Are the photographs of good technical quality? Do they have good, consistent contrast? Are they in focus? Is red-eye avoided in color photos?

- Are the images compelling and attention-getting, achieved by using the rule of thirds, obvious centers of interest, uncluttered backgrounds, framing, leading lines, etc.?
- Are photographs cropped tightly to the point of interest?
- Do photographs contain reactions and emotions, keying on significant moments? Is the book relatively free of posed or “posed candid” shots?
- If photos are digitally manipulated, has the photo content remained fundamentally the same? Has the digital software been used to make the same changes that would be acceptable through traditional methods in a darkroom (i.e., making a photo lighter or darker, adding or decreasing contrast, improving color balance, etc.)?
- Are odd shapes avoided? Are special effects used sparingly and for a thoughtful purpose?
- Do the photos on a spread vary in content, shape (vertical versus horizontal versus square) and in the angle from which they have been taken?
- Has the dominant photo been chosen carefully to provide a strong anchor for the spread? Do the other photographs complement the dominant?
- In group photos, are subjects arranged in easily identifiable rows with recognizable faces and empty space eliminated in the photo arrangement or by cropping later?