

# JOURNALISM

## Bexley High School

### Unit 1: Introduction to Journalism—2 weeks

Students are introduced to the basic terms of journalistic writing and design, the functions that the news media serve in our society, and the history of journalism. Students will become familiar with the news media in both print and online forms.

#### Learning Targets

I can define and identify...

- different types of stories, including news stories (including both advance and follow-up stories), feature stories, sidebars, editorials, columns, reviews and in-depth stories.
- terms used in the world of print journalism, including the inverted pyramid, attribution, byline, cutline/caption, editorializing, the five w's and one h, folio, graf, infographic, lead, masthead, nameplate, pull quote and teaser.
- the various functions of the news media, including the political, economic, sentry, recordkeeping, entertainment, social, marketplace and agenda-setting functions.

I can understand and explain...

- the early development of the press in Europe, including the role of Gutenberg and King Henry VIII.
- the characteristics of early colonial American newspapers, the significance of *Publick Occurrences* and *The Boston News-Letter*, and the role of the British government in controlling content of these publications.
- the significance of the Zenger Case to the development of American libel law.
- the characteristics of the penny press in the United States and its role in shaping American journalism.
- why the founding of *The New York Times* was significant to American journalism.
- the impact of the telegraph on journalism.
- what yellow journalism is, as well as its development, including the roles of newsies, Nellie Bly, Joseph Pulitzer, William Randolph Hearst, and the Spanish-American War.
- What muckraking journalism is, and how it developed.
- How the American government affected news coverage of World War I.
- The characteristics of American journalism in the 1920s.
- How the American press covered World War II.
- Journalist Edward R. Murrow's role in challenging Senator Joseph McCarthy.
- The role of the press—in particular Walter Cronkite—in questioning America's involvement in Vietnam.
- The significance of the Watergate scandal and the Pentagon Papers case.
- The significance of the *Washington Post's* Pulitzer Prize scandal in 1981.
- The significance of *USA Today* in shaping modern print media.
- The role of black and foreign language presses in American history and society.



## Unit 2: Law & Ethics of Journalism—2 weeks

Students learn about and discuss the legal and ethical standards governing the work of both student and professional journalists. They apply this knowledge to legal and ethical scenarios that reporters might face, and they discuss real-life situations journalists have encountered.

### Learning Targets

I can explain...

- The origin of the *Tinker* case and the impact of the Supreme Court decision on student speech rights.
- The origin of the *Hazelwood* case and the impact of the Supreme Court decision on student press rights.
- The origin of the *Bethel v. Fraser* case and the impact of the Supreme Court decision on student speech rights.
- The origin of the *Morse v. Frederick* case and the impact of the Supreme Court decision on student speech rights.
- The legal limits of online speech, including postings that are both school related and non-school related.
- The five basic requirements necessary for libel to exist.
- The principle of malice and who must prove it when suing for libel.
- The special protections of privilege and fair comment as they relate to libel law.
- The four major components of invasion of privacy law—intrusion, misappropriation, false light, publishing private/embarrassing information—and how to avoid them.
- How to be sure you have given a source the opportunity to provide informed consent to be interviewed.
- The principles and laws governing the responsible use of anonymous sources.
- How to keep notes protected as a reporter.
- The provisions of the Federal Privacy Protection Act that relate to journalists.
- How to avoid copyright infringement, and what fair use law allows.
- A publication's legal responsibilities for letters to the editor.
- What the law says about printing the names of juveniles involved in a crime.
- The major ethical principles of accuracy and objectivity (including how to avoid a conflict of interest).
- The additional ethical principles of good taste, simultaneous rebuttal, and honesty.
- The ethical principles governing the manipulation of photos.

## Unit 3: Introduction to Newswriting—4 weeks

Students learn how to determine the newsworthiness of their information and learn the basic skills of newswriting. After an introduction to the basics of AP style, instruction begins with a focus on writing news leads and then moves on to the journalistic conventions of paraphrasing, quoting, and attributing information. Skills in editing and revising are regularly practiced in the classroom. Students craft two news stories based on information provided to them to establish a strong foundation in newswriting before moving on in the next unit to instruction in information gathering and interviewing.

## Learning Targets

I can...

- Use the news elements of proximity, timeliness, prominence, consequence, human interest and conflict to determine the newsworthiness of information.
- Write a lead of one sentence (approximately 20-30 words) that focuses on the most important information and follows the basic rules of lead writing.
- Determine when a blind lead is appropriate and use a blind lead correctly.
- Cover all of the 5 Ws and 1 H early in the story.
- Organize the information according to the inverted pyramid form.
- Separate my information into short paragraphs (grafs) according to journalistic style.
- Clearly attribute all information and quotes, following all the rules for quoting and attributing information in journalistic style.
- Choose direct quotes carefully and choose to paraphrase when appropriate.
- Follow all style rules.
- Proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Give a complete, well-balanced picture of the whole story.
- Provide accurate information.

## Unit 4: Information Gathering & Interviewing/Advanced Newswriting—3 weeks

In this unit, students learn how to gather information and interview sources in a professional manner. The unit includes instruction in selecting sources, preparing for interviews, conducting interviews, and managing source material. Students have opportunities to practice generating questions and conducting one-on-one and press conference-style interviews. Building on these skills, as well as those from Unit 3, students must gather their own information and craft a news story about a current issue or event at the school. Students will conduct an in-class, press conference-style interview with a primary source and then interview additional sources on their own. In addition to receiving feedback from the instructor on a draft of their story, students will also work with each other to edit and improve their stories.

## Learning Targets

I can...

- Explain when and why it might be necessary to do background research before an interview.
- Explain who makes a good source for a story.
- Explain the need for a balance of sources in a story.
- Explain the difference between open and closed questions and rewrite closed questions when they would be better as open questions.
- Brainstorm appropriate, well-worded questions covering all the relevant 5 W's and 1 H to prepare for an interview.
- Prepare for both impromptu and sit-down interviews.
- Properly identify myself to allow interview subjects to provide informed consent.
- Properly order and prepare interview questions, including what to always ask first and last.
- Explain the two things you must do if you wish to tape record an interview.
- Explain how to make a distinction between paraphrase and direct quotes in notes.
- Identify techniques for keeping interview subjects talking.
- Explain the importance of asking for clarification and double-checking information.

- Explain what it means to go off the record, and what you must do as a reporter if you go off the record.
- Explain when it is appropriate to use anonymous sources and how to handle them.
- Explain what to do with your notes once you have conducted the interview and once the story is published.
- Write a lead of one sentence (approximately 20-30 words) that focuses on the most important information and follows the basic rules of lead writing.
- Determine when a blind lead is appropriate and use a blind lead correctly.
- Cover all of the 5 Ws and 1 H early in the story.
- Organize the information according to the inverted pyramid form.
- Separate my information into short paragraphs (grafs) according to journalistic style.
- Clearly attribute all information and quotes, following all the rules for quoting and attributing information in journalistic style.
- Choose direct quotes carefully and choose to paraphrase when appropriate.
- Follow all style rules.
- Proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Give a complete, well-balanced picture of the whole story.
- Provide accurate information.

### **Opinion Writing—2 weeks**

Following an introduction to the development of opinion writing in the American press and its role in news publications today, students look more closely at the structure and characteristics of the editorial and discuss exemplars. Each student then generates an original argument about an issue of concern to Bexley students to develop into an editorial of 400-500 words.

#### **Learning Targets**

I can...

- Explain the role of opinion writing in early American newspapers.
- Explain the impact of the penny press on opinion writing in American newspapers.
- Name the four basic components of editorial pages in a daily newspaper.
- Define “editorial.”
- Define “column.”
- Explain how syndicates provide content to newspapers, including syndicated columns.
- Explain the importance of research, thought and style in the writing of editorials.
- Name five different approaches editorials can take in school newspapers.
- Explain how to organize an editorial.
- Generate ideas for editorials that focus on school-related issues.
- Select an appropriate topic that is arguable and that is neither too broad nor too narrow.
- Explain a justification for the editorial topic.
- Write an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention and introduces the topic in a creative way.
- Write a thesis—the editorial’s central argument—that is clear and concise and that appears early in the editorial.
- Provide any necessary background information in the editorial to help the reader understand the situation under discussion.

- Provide 3-4 strong arguments to support the thesis, including an argument that counters an opposing viewpoint when possible.
- Support all arguments with facts and clear reasoning.
- Offer a solution to the problem being presented in the editorial.
- Conclude the editorial with brief final comments that will leave the reader thinking about the importance of this topic.
- Proofread for errors of style, spelling and grammar.
- Manage the content of an editorial to meet a 400-500 word count, a common length for school newspaper editorials.

### **Writing Headlines—1/2 week**

Students learn about the conventions of type and fonts, as well as relevant terminology related to news headlines. Students study the conventional rules of writing news headlines and critique headlines for practice before writing their own based on a set of news leads.

#### **Learning Targets**

I can...

- Explain type size conventions for body text and headlines.
- Identify serif fonts, sans serif fonts and novelty fonts and explain when it is appropriate to use each.
- Identify the use of kickers, decks, flush-left style and downstyle.
- Identify when a headline fails to follow the rules of construction.
- Use the rules of headline construction to write original headlines based on news story excerpts.

### **Feature Writing—2 weeks**

Students learn about and discuss the significant characteristics of feature stories, including notable ways in which they differ from news stories. Students read and discuss a number of exemplar stories, including personality profiles, personal experience stories, and trend stories. Students also read and discuss a number of feature story lead examples to determine the best approach to writing a feature lead. Following this study of feature stories, students propose their own feature story ideas and choose one to pursue, conducting independent interviews and gathering their own information to shape into a news story.

#### **Learning Targets**

I can...

- Explain how feature stories are different from news stories.
- Explain how to generate ideas for feature stories.
- Explain what a news feature story is.
- Explain what a personality feature story is and provide examples.
- Explain what a personal experience feature story is and provide examples.
- Explain what a trend feature story is and provide examples.
- Explain different approaches to writing the feature lead.
- Explain how to organize a feature story, including the best way to conclude it.



- Generate original ideas for feature stories that could appear in the school newspaper.
- Generate ideas for possible sources and high quality questions for a feature story.
- Conduct professional interviews that reveal high quality, interesting information and relevant details/anecdotes for a feature story.
- Write a feature story that...
  - ✓ Begins with a creative, featurized lead to grab the reader's attention and indicate the focus of the story. An adequate transition takes the reader from lead to story.
  - ✓ Includes lively quotes from appropriate sources and paraphrased information for balance. Stacked quotes are avoided. Quotes add life and interest to the story.
  - ✓ Attributes all information and quotes clearly and correctly, avoiding editorializing.
  - ✓ Is organized: the story has a logical order and is easy to follow.
  - ✓ Concludes with a source's quote that adequately sums up the story, leaving the reader with a sense of wholeness.
  - ✓ Is interesting to read and illuminates interesting experiences, ideas or information, providing the reader with something they didn't know about the topic before. An adequate number of sources is used to create a well-rounded story.
  - ✓ Is free of style, spelling and grammatical errors. There is no wordiness or awkward sentence construction.

### **Introduction to Page Design and Adobe InDesign—2 weeks**

Students are instructed in the basic principles of newspaper page design and use this knowledge to critique sample newspaper pages. Students are instructed in the basic use of Adobe InDesign software and use the principles of page design to construct a page.

#### **Learning Targets**

I can...

- Explain the principle of functional page design.
- Identify tombstoning and explain two ways to avoid it.
- Explain the 1/8-inch rule for white space and explain why too much white space and too little white space can create design flaws.
- Explain the three basic "colors" of space in design and identify when it is not appropriately balanced.
- Define modular design.
- Explain the essential guidelines for page design.
- Explain why action in photos should face into the page.
- Explain three different design options for designing a story/photo package.
- Use Adobe InDesign to...
  - Place text and transform it into the appropriate style.
  - Adjust the number of columns in a story.
  - Place a photo.
  - Crop and resize a photo without distorting it.
  - Create a 1 pt. border on a photo.
  - Place a photo credit.
  - Place a caption.
  - Use the text wrap option.
  - Create headlines and adjust size and horizontal scale as needed.
  - Place a byline.
  - Use guides to align content and adjust white space to follow the 1/8-inch rule.
  - Follow all design principles while designing a page.