



# Missouri Interscholastic Press Association YEARBOOK CRITIQUE SCORESHEET

---

Yearbook Name:

School:

City:

Type of School:      Small          Medium          Large          Extra Large

## How to Use the Yearbook Critique:

The critique should serve as a learning tool. Constructive criticism is at the heart of this evaluation. That means the evaluation probably will focus more on weaknesses than on strengths. The judge's comments are suggestions for improvement, and because it is impossible for the judge to be aware of each situation, the comments may not apply to every school. Don't be disheartened or defensive. We hope the expert will also make clear what things you are doing well. Then we encourage you, adviser and staff, to evaluate the suggestions critically and to incorporate useful ideas from this evaluation into future issues. Individual items in this critique represent some of the basic current guidelines for strong publications stressing journalistic ideas. These are the standards on which your yearbook is evaluated.

Now, let's address the other primary function of a critical service - the more sensitive issue of ratings. Let's make it clear: We believe in deserved recognition for student publications. It builds staff morale and may help your administrators, teachers and fellow students appreciate your efforts more. But a "rating" can become counterproductive when it is regarded almost as if it were a personal criticism of the adviser or the staff. Keep in mind it is one person's considered opinion.

We ask judges to adhere to this guidebook and to be as unbiased as possible. Keep in mind that MIPA rotates evaluators each year for each enrollment category. This means you will get some variance in evaluators' opinions.

For rating purposes, we have five major categories: Theme/Concept/Services; Coverage; Writing/Editing; Design and Photography. Within the sections, each criterion will be judged with:

- \* a S for strong work,
- \* an A for adequate work
- \* a N for work that needs improvement

The judge will then assign a score based on the overall work within that category. Each section of the evaluation is worth 100 points for a total of 500 points. We believe this more holistic approach to scoring will help put the evaluation into better perspective.

The judge will send recommended ratings to the MIPA office, which will review them and inform the school of the official result by email within five (5) business days of the judge completing the critique. On J-Day in April, the school will be officially recognized with an award, should one be earned.

In what we hope will be only rare cases, if adviser is so dissatisfied with the evaluation, even under our new system, that she/he wishes a re-evaluation by another expert, the adviser must request a reevaluation within 15 school days of receipt of the critique. The written request must state the reasons and include a \$45 rejudging fee or purchase order number, a second copy of the yearbook and a copy of the critique. Please send the request for rejudging to the MIPA office.

Awards will be given as follows in each class:

- All-Missouri - 450-500 points
- Superior - 400-449 points
- Excellent - 350-399 points
- Honorable Mention - 300-349 points
- No Award - below 299 points

*Acknowledgement: This guidebook was written in 1990, revised in 1997 and 2001, and updated in 2015. Special thanks to the Alabama Scholastic Press Association, the Kansas Scholastic Press Association and the ILPC of Texas.*

# PART ONE: THEME/ CONCEPT/ SERVICES:

## JUDGE'S COMMENTS:

### THEME/CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Theme/concept is easily recognized by readers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Theme is relevant to the school, students and year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Theme/concept is creative, imaginative and original.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Theme copy creates unity by tying the book together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cover, endsheets, opening, closing and divider pages support theme/concept, leading the reader logically through the book.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Artwork, graphics, photography and color develop the theme/concept.

### ENDSHEETS/SPINE:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cover introduces theme verbally and visually.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book name and year are on the cover.
- \_\_\_\_\_ School name, book name, volume number, city and state are on the spine, when size of book allows.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Endsheets coordinate with theme/concept.

### OPENING/CLOSING/DIVISION PAGES:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Design of theme pages is distinctly different from design in rest of book while remaining consistent with the theme.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy on theme pages is specific enough to show how theme/concept is related to the school year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy for closing section effectively brings the theme/concept to a conclusion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Optional: creative section titles/spinoff titles from the theme help develop the theme/concept.

### SERVICES:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Title page includes vital information: book name, volume number, year, complete school name, address, city, state, ZIP code, telephone number. May include website, student population, other school information and fax number.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A contents listing appears early in the book, but not on the title page.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The contents listing includes the beginning page number and names of major divisions/sections.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Page numbers and folios appear on all spreads and are placed consistently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bylines and photo credits are clear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A complete index, including all students, faculty, sports, events, activities, clubs and advertisers is included.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos, copy and/or graphics are incorporated to enhance index.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acknowledgements and production information have been listed in a colophon near the back of the book.

### POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE FOR THEME/ CONCEPT/ SERVICES:

# PART TWO: COVERAGE:

## JUDGE'S COMMENTS:

Contemporary organization of a yearbook does not dictate coverage in traditional sections. However, student life, academics, organizations, sports, people, advertising and community are all subjects that should be covered in every yearbook, regardless of whether it is traditionally organized, chronological, topical, or otherwise organized.

### STUDENT LIFE:

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage reflects a full year, showing all aspects of student life and attempting to show what made this year special and different.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage is a balance of both in- and out-of-school activities, giving an overview of the entire year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feature reporting has been approached from a unique, human interest angle, avoiding repetitive or over-used topics.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feature coverage is expanded through secondary coverage/non-traditional/alternative formats.

### ACADEMICS:

\_\_\_\_\_ Interesting and innovative coverage takes the reader behind the scenes, showing direct involvement of students in the learning process.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feature reporting interprets the activities that lead students to knowledge both in and out of classes.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage is expanded through secondary coverage/non-traditional/alternative formats.

\_\_\_\_\_ Photographs show students primarily in actual classroom and out-of-class learning activities, avoiding posed images.

### ORGANIZATIONS:

\_\_\_\_\_ Emphasis is placed on activities and events rather than the general purpose or goals of the groups.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage topics make club activities come alive, showing accomplishments and contributions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reporting, including secondary formats, emphasizes what is new this year, supported by specific details.

\_\_\_\_\_ Group photos are subordinate to action photos.

### SPORTS:

\_\_\_\_\_ Equal and adequate coverage is achieved.

\_\_\_\_\_ Off-campus sporting activities are covered.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage captures the excitement and highlights of games and seasons, showing what it was like to be a member of the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reporting reflects reactions and emotions, keying on significant moments.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reporting avoids predictions about next year or making excuses for the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ Team photos are subordinate to action photos.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete scoreboards are included for each sport.

**PEOPLE:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage includes all students, faculty and staff.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feature coverage appears on every spread.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coverage, including secondary formats, highlights the concerns, activities, individual achievements and class activities of students/faculty/staff.

\_\_\_\_\_ The faculty/staff pages include full names and subjects taught and also may include activities sponsored.

**ADVERTISING OR COMMUNITY (if available):**

\_\_\_\_\_ Ads appeal verbally and visually to the audience of the book.

\_\_\_\_\_ When possible, students are featured in ads.

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron lists are consistent and professional.

\_\_\_\_\_ If covered, feature coverage is used to show student involvement with the community.

\_\_\_\_\_ If covered, national and international events place emphasis on local angles.

**POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE  
FOR COVERAGE:****JUDGE'S COMMENTS:**

# **PART THREE: WRITING/ EDITING:**

## **BODY COPY:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Reporting is journalistic, the result of interviewing and observation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy invokes the emotions of the year, making described events come alive for the reader.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy is specific, focusing on one school in one year, with an interesting angle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feature writing avoids label openers, using instead featurized leads to draw the reader into the story.

\_\_\_\_\_ Use of frequent, meaningful, story-telling quotes from sources reflects solid interviewing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy avoids editorializing and prophesizing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Generally, copy is past tense and written in the third person.

\_\_\_\_\_ Paragraphs are short and carefully edited.

\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary coverage supplements most spreads, avoiding visual clutter and showcasing additional coverage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Staff has demonstrated use of a recognized stylebook for greater consistency.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bylines, if used, do not distract.

## **HEADLINES:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Headlines contain vital information that grabs the readers' attention and pulls them into the story.

\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary or sub headlines provide additional detail.

\_\_\_\_\_ Headlines are interesting, clever, appropriate and accurate. They state more than the obvious.

\_\_\_\_\_ Headlines offer a visual/verbal connection.

\_\_\_\_\_ Generally, headlines are written in present tense with active verbs, avoiding repetition of words.

\_\_\_\_\_ Headlines do not editorialize.

\_\_\_\_\_ The headline tone matches the tone of the story.

## **CAPTIONS:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Every photo has a caption. (Some photo illustrations may not incorporate captions.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Captions explain more than the obvious, telling what happened before and after the photo was taken.

\_\_\_\_\_ Except for crown shots, captions name everyone visible in the photo with complete first and last names.

\_\_\_\_\_ The first sentence is written in present tense; subsequent sentences are written in past tense, if appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Quotes are often used to supplement captions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gag or cute captions are not used. Captions do not editorialize or speculate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Optional: Creative lead-ins draw the reader into the caption, set off by various graphic techniques.

\_\_\_\_\_ When feasible, captions for sports photos identify players from opposing teams, also.

\_\_\_\_\_ Captions for group photos are consistent, indicating use of a stylebook, and naming everyone in the team or group.

## **POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE FOR WRITING/ EDITING:**

# **PART FOUR: DESIGN:**

## **JUDGE'S COMMENTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Design attracts readers to the spreads while making content easy to digest.

\_\_\_\_\_ Designs are distinctive and uncluttered, emphasizing fundamental design principles of proportion, balance, harmony, contrast, sequence and unity.

\_\_\_\_\_ Generally, facing pages are designed as a single unit.

\_\_\_\_\_ There is a consistent inner spacing between all elements elements.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate and consistent external margins have been established.

\_\_\_\_\_ White space has been planned and used as a graphic device.

\_\_\_\_\_ A horizontal eye line, a photo bled across the gutter or a graphic technique is used to link facing pages.

\_\_\_\_\_ Each spread has a dominant element that serves as the visual center of interest.

\_\_\_\_\_ Designs feature a variety of photo shapes and sizes.

\_\_\_\_\_ Odd-shaped photos have been avoided.

\_\_\_\_\_ Photos bled across the gutter are planned so faces or other key areas are not in the gutter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Photos are grouped toward the center, with captions typically to the outside.

\_\_\_\_\_ Graphic techniques have been incorporated to enhance content and avoid detracting from coverage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Typographical presentation is attractive, featuring a limited number of different font choices.

\_\_\_\_\_ Typographic elements (such as initial letters, lead-ins, pull quotes) enhance attractiveness of design.

\_\_\_\_\_ Typography of copy, headlines and captions is consistent in design and is legible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Packaged or clip art is used sparingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mug shots in people section have been arranged in rectangular panels.

\_\_\_\_\_ Infographics are designed for easy readability and are consistent in style throughout section.

## **POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE FOR DESIGN:**

# PART FIVE: PHOTOGRAPHY:

## JUDGE'S COMMENTS:

### TECHNICAL QUALITY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Overall, photos are technically strong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos exhibit good contrast; light, dark, gray and muddy prints have been omitted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Focus is sharp; fuzzy and blurred photos have been omitted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Depth of field is effective. People in the foreground and mid-ground are in sharp focus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos do not show dust, scratches, fingerprints or graininess.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The focal point of images is not dead center, utilizing the rule of thirds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Action photos haven't been cropped so there is sufficient room to show where the action originated or is going; photos are placed on the page so the movement does not lead off the page.

### CONTENT:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Most photos have dramatic content.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Posed shots are avoided.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos show on-the-spot reporting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A variety of people have been used in photos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each photo has a clear focal point.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People have been photographed in natural settings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Content of photos is varied on spreads.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos are well-cropped.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Portrait panel photos are of reasonable size.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Portraits with busy backgrounds are avoided.

### GROUP PHOTOS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Groups are posed in horizontal rows, generally cropped directly above the heads in the back row and at the waists of the front row.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faces do not blend into the background, and head sizes are reasonable in size and uniformity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Group photos do not bleed off the page or across the gutter.

### POINTS OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY:

# **JUDGE'S SUMMARY COMMENTS:**

## **TOTAL POINTS:**

/100 points Theme/Concept/Services

/100 points Coverage

/100 points Writing/Editing

/100 points Design

/100 points Photography

/500 total points

## **RECOMMENDED RATING:**

All-Missouri - 450-500 points

Superior - 400-449 points

Excellent - 350-399 points

Honorable Mention - 300-349 points

No Award - below 299 points

## **JUDGE'S NAME:**