

TIMELY TIPS

Design

Understanding Scale

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn how scale (size relationships among elements) affects visual hierarchy, emphasis and balance in a spread layout. They'll practice applying scale intentionally to guide reader attention.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper (blank or grid) or sketchbooks
- Rulers
- Markers or pencils
- Access to design software
- Samples spreads from [Theme Gallery](#) or magazines
- [That Yearbook Podcast | Season 3: Episode 1](#)

PART 1

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

- Listen to Episode 1 of [That Yearbook Podcast](#) and reflect with your staff.
- **Ask:** *When you look at a spread, what stands out first and why?*
- Explain that scale is how size differences between elements (photos, text, graphics) create emphasis and balance. Larger items dominate; smaller ones support. Show a few sample spreads and identify the dominant element together.

PART 2

SCALE SKETCH CHALLENGE (20 MINUTES)

Step 1: Students sketch 2-3 mini spread layouts for a school event, changing the scale each time: one with a huge photo, one with a bold headline and one with even balance.

Step 2: Have students trade sketches with a partner and identify which layout best uses scale to direct attention.

Step 3: Each student refines their best sketch, labeling what they would enlarge or shrink if building the spread digitally.

PART 3

CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)

Discuss:

- Which scale choices made the layout easiest to read?
- How can scale help tell a stronger visual story?

Challenge students to apply these adjustments to a current spread.