

# TIMELY TIPS

## Editing

Eliminating Bias and Editorializing  
in Yearbook Writing

### OBJECTIVE

Students will examine how bias and editorializing appear in yearbook storytelling and apply ethical strategies to write fair, accurate and balanced coverage that represents their school community responsibly.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Whiteboard or board space for group notes

### PART 1

#### INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

**Write this question on the board:**

Can a story be accurate and still be unfair?

**Steps:**

1. Give students two minutes to write a yes or no with one reason
2. Have students turn to a partner and compare answers
3. Ask for two volunteers to share different viewpoints

Do not discuss just yet. Tell students they will return to it later.

### PART 2

#### KEY TERMS (5 MINUTES)

- **Ethics:** A system of values that guides what is right and responsible.
- **Editorializing:** Inserting opinions or judgments instead of facts.
- **Bias:** Favoring one perspective through word choice, sourcing or omission.

**Reminder:** Yearbook journalists tell others' stories, not their own opinions.

### PART 3

#### ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

In small groups, discuss each scenario.

1. **"The team dominated every opponent and proved they were the best in the state."**
  - What words show opinion?
  - How could this be rewritten in an unbiased way?
2. **A story includes quotes from only one side of a controversial issue.**
  - How does omission create bias?
  - Who is missing in the story?
3. **"An incredible leader, Jordan Lee inspired everyone at the assembly."**
  - Who is making this claim?
  - What details could show this instead?
4. **A spread highlights criticism of homecoming but includes no response from the homecoming committee.**
  - What ethical responsibility is at risk?
  - How could this be balanced?

### PART 4

#### APPLY IT: SHOW DON'T TELL (10 MINUTES)

**Fix this sentence: "The crowd was excited during the game."**

Rewrite using only observable details such as actions, sounds or reactions.

LESSON CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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### PART 5

### CONCLUSION: FULL CIRCLE (5 MINUTES)

**Return to the opening question:**

Can a story be accurate and still be unfair?

**Steps:**

- Students reread their original response
- They write one sentence answering the question again
- Asks for one or two volunteers to share how or why their thinking changed

**Final Reminder:** Ethical storytelling is not about removing emotion. It is about earning trust by letting facts and voices speak.