

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

TIMELY TIPS

Editing

Eliminating Bias and Editorializing
in Yearbook Writing

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.