

TIMELY TIPS

Staff Management

Yearbook Reflection & Goal Setting for Next Year

OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze this year's yearbook to identify strengths and weaknesses, then translate them into specific improvement goals for next year.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Copies of this year's book or printed final proofs/digital access to pages if not submitted
- Sticky notes or shared document
- Pens or pencils
- Whiteboard or chart paper

PART 1

INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Explain to students that professional journalists, designers and creative teams regularly perform post-project reviews. In yearbook, **this process helps staffs avoid repeating the same mistakes year after year.**

Introduce the idea of a yearbook reflection. Emphasize that this process is about identifying patterns, not pointing fingers. The book is finished, and the goal is to learn from it. Ask the following questions and discuss as a class:

- Which parts of this book make you proud?
- Where do you feel we struggled or rushed?
- If next year's staff did everything the same way, what would change?

PART 2

AUTOPSY THE BOOK (25 MINUTES)

Divide students into small groups. Each group reviews a section of the book or spreads they worked on most. Using sticky notes or a shared document, have students respond to these guiding prompts:

Strengths

- Which spreads feel strongest?
- What works well visually or editorially?

Gaps

- Where did we miss stories, people or moments?
- What feels repetitive or overdone?

Relevance

- What feels dated, predictable or safe?
- What would we rethink if we were designing this now?

Reality Check

- If we had one more deadline, what would we fix first?

PART 3

GOAL SETTING (15 MINUTES)

Individually, have students write one realistic improvement goal for next year's book using this structure:

- Next year, our staff will _____
- So that _____
- By doing _____

Example: Next year, our staff will broaden club and activity coverage so that more students see themselves in the book by striving to include each student at least three times.

As a staff, rank which goals take higher priority and record the top 10–15 in a shared document to revisit during summer planning or fall staff training.