

BOOT CAMP

Building a Profile Spread

OBJECTIVE: Students will evaluate a topic and determine whether a profile spread is the best coverage choice by identifying compelling individuals, developing interview questions and planning ways to tell a unique story through in-depth coverage.

STEP 1: MINI-LESSON

Before watching the video, bootcamp builds on the foundational design concepts covered in the 2025 series. If your staff is new to yearbook or still learning the basics of spread design, dominant photos, headlines, captions and grid design, watch the 2025 Bootcamp videos first before completing this activity. The 2026 series focuses on selecting the best coverage approach for a topic, not teaching the basic components of a spread.

Watch the Bootcamp 2026: Profile Spread video.

After viewing, discuss the following:

Characteristics of a Profile Spread

- Dedicated to an individual or small group with a unique story to tell
- Focuses on in-depth storytelling and personality-driven coverage
- May include a traditional feature story, Q&A format or first-person narrative
- Uses dramatic storytelling photos and larger images
- Often incorporates strong typography and intentional white space
- Can include small supporting mods that help tell the story

Emphasize the key question from the video:

"Whose story deserves a deeper look?"

Explain that profile spreads work best when:

- Someone has a unique experience, challenge, talent or accomplishment worth highlighting
- The story requires more depth than a caption or mod package can provide
- Multiple interviews and meaningful storytelling add value to the coverage
- The goal is to help readers connect with a person behind the story

CONTINUE THE LESSON ON THE NEXT PAGE

BOOT CAMP

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STEP 2: FIND THE STORY

Part 1: Profile Prospecting (Partner Activity)

Working in pairs, students brainstorm people at their school who might make strong profile subjects.

Possible categories include:

- Student entrepreneurs
- Athletes with unusual training routines
- Students with unique hobbies
- Club leaders
- Students with interesting summer experiences
- Student artists or performers
- Student workers
- Teachers with unique backgrounds
- Students involved in community service

Once pairs identify three possible profile subjects, they should answer:

1. What makes this person's story unique?
2. Why would yearbook readers care?
3. Does this story require deeper coverage than a traditional spread or mod package?

Pairs then select their strongest candidate.

Partner 2: Interview Workshop

For their chosen profile subject, students create:

Five Interview Questions

Questions should move beyond basic facts and uncover stories, experiences and personality.

Examples:

- What experience has had the biggest impact on you this year?
- What challenge have you overcome?
- What do most people not know about you?
- What are you most proud of?
- How has this experience changed you?

Photo Planning

Students identify:

- One dominant photo opportunity
- Two supporting photo ideas
- One location that helps tell the story visually

CONTINUE THE LESSON ON THE NEXT PAGE

BOOT CAMP

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STEP 3: COVERAGE PLANNING

Using InDesign or Yearbook 360 – Online Design, students create a simple profile template that includes:

- A large dominant photo area
- Story or Q&A package
- Headline package
- Space for supporting images
- Optional supporting mod

The goal is planning the story, not completing the spread.

STEP 4: CLOSURE

Conduct a quick share-out. Each pair presents:

- Potential profile subject
- Why their story matters
- Best interview question
- Dominant photo idea