

TIMELY TIPS

Design

Yearbook Storytelling and Design Practice

OBJECTIVE

Students will practice yearbook storytelling and design by creating a two-page spread featuring purposeful photos, written content, captions and a clear visual hierarchy.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Device with access to Yearbook 360 – Online Design or Adobe InDesign
- At least seven personal photos from four different events or moments
- Access to yearbook design examples, such as the [Walsworth Yearbooks Presidents Collection](#)
- Paper and pencil for planning

PART 1

STUDY YOUR INSPIRATION

Before students begin designing, review the basic parts of a yearbook spread and discuss how design choices guide readers through a story.

Display several sample spreads and have students identify:

- Headline and subhead
- Dominant photo
- Photo treatments
- Copy treatment
- Captions
- Mods
- Typography and color choices

Ask:

- Which element catches your attention first?
- How do the photos and copy work together?
- What helps the spread feel organized?
- Which design choices make the story easy to follow?

Remind students that an effective spread does more than arrange content. Every photo, word and design element should help tell the story.

PART 2

PLAN YOUR STORY

Have each student choose the story they want the spread to communicate about them. The content should show different parts of the student's interests, experiences or personality rather than serving as a list of unrelated facts.

Students should gather and prepare:

- At least seven photos from four different events or moments
- A headline and subhead
- A 75-125 word story
- One direct quote
- Three fun facts
- A caption for every photo

Before designing, have students make a simple sketch showing the approximate placement of the dominant photo, supporting photos, copy block and mods.

Discuss:

- Which photo best represents the main story?
- What details will readers learn from the written content?
- Do the photos show variety?
- How will the headline introduce the story rather than simply label the page?

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PART 3

DESIGN YOUR SPREAD

Students will create a two-page spread using the yearbook production software their staff uses.

The completed design should include:

- One dominant photo
- An organized photo package
- One copy block
- One or two mods
- No more than two or three fonts
- No more than two or three colors
- Consistent alignment and spacing
- A clear visual hierarchy
- A caption for every photo

Encourage students to save their work frequently. As they design, have them pause periodically and view the entire spread rather than concentrating on one element at a time.

Before submitting, students should proofread the spread, confirm all required content is present and review the design for consistency.

PART 4

CLOSING

A successful yearbook spread combines meaningful content with intentional design. The strongest layouts help readers understand what matters, where to look and how each element contributes to the story.

Have students present their spreads to a partner or small group.

Reflection:

- Which design choice most effectively communicates your story?
- What part of the spread would you revise after receiving feedback?
- How did your photo selection affect the story readers received?

RELEVANT RESOURCES

Use these resources to continue building students' yearbook storytelling and design skills.

- [Yearbook Playbook: Yearbook Basics and Parts of a Spread](#) – Review the basic components and terminology students need before beginning their designs.
- [Yearbook Bootcamp: Traditional Spread Training Video](#) – Introduce students to the structure of a traditional yearbook spread.
- [Walsworth 5-Day Online Design eBook](#) – Help students develop foundational skills for creating pages in Yearbook 360 – Online Design.
- [Using InDesign Manual](#) – Support for students completing the assignment in Adobe InDesign.
- [Yearbook Help](#) – Find additional training videos and production resources.
- [Walsworth Theme Gallery](#) – Review sample spreads and discuss how photography, typography and layout work together.