

Journalism

****What beginning student journalists need to know to succeed:**

1. **What is news?** Gossip is not news. Rumors are not news. News is a departure from the norm. It is information that can be important, useful, interesting, educational, humorous, and sometimes surprising.
2. **The difference between important and less important information.** Teenagers receive tons of information daily... when do you stop and say... **whatever?**
3. **Connections between various types of information.** If a coach tells a student reporter that he expects his team will do better than last year, then the student must make the connection and find out how the team did last year.
4. **The difference between an information consumer and an information provider.** Young people are generally consumers, but a student reporter must turn the tables and be the information provider.
5. **How to write short, simple sentences and paragraphs.** Simplicity and clarity is the rule. No essays.
6. **How to write compound sentences and punctuate correctly.** Self-explanatory.
7. **How to avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments.** Never say in 20 words and three commas what you can say in 12 words and no commas.
8. **What is a comma splice?** Joining two independent clauses without a conjunction or semi-colon.
9. **People who, things that.** (WRONG: The players that were on the team...)
10. **Subject-verb agreement.** (WRONG: The team is doing their best.)
11. **Editing and how to edit yourself.** Several drafts of a story are the key to proper editing.
12. **How to interview face-to-face.** Not by e-mail. Take notes at an interview and to ask follow up questions. Effective note-taking is essential.
13. **How to use quotations and punctuate them correctly.** Quotes should start their own paragraph and contain no more than two sentences of quoted material. Punctuation goes inside the quotes.
14. **The difference between a headline and a lead.** To be explained.

15. **Objective writing and subjective writing.** Objective = facts and subjective = opinion.
16. **Meet deadlines and follow instructions.** Self-explanatory.
17. **Journalistic writing style.** Will familiarize yourself with the Associated Press (AP) Styleguide in class.
18. **Punctuation, capitalization, and abbreviations.**
19. **Spelling.** Become a better speller without relying on spell-check.
20. **Basic rules of grammar.** Basic English skills combined with the AP Styleguide.