Pursuing Personal and Professional Passions: A Final Master's Portfolio

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Pursuing Personal & Professional Passions

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English with a specialization in

Professional Writing and Rhetoric Track

4 December 2022

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Table of Contents

Analytical Narrative ............................................................................................................. 3

Project 1 Research & Analysis ............................................................................................. 10
  “Case Study of Animal Crossing: New Horizons Facebook Fan Group: The Participatory Culture of Technical Communication within a Video Game Online Community”

Project 2 Research & Analysis ............................................................................................. 38
  “Framing Female Subjectivity in KPOP: CLC and (G)I-DLE Confronting the Gaze”

Project 3 ............................................................................................................................. 61
  “Peer Response to Writing Amongst Student Journalists”

Project 4 ............................................................................................................................. 72
  “Bulldog Times Journalism Staff Manual”
Analytical Narrative

As a secondary English language arts teacher, I believe guiding students in understanding rhetoric and the applications of writing across disciplines is my defining purpose. Upon entering the Master’s program, I sought to expand the breadth of my knowledge and expertise to not only become a more effective teacher but a more proficient professional writer or technical communicator overall. Although the discipline of technical communication is often narrowly conceived as writing instruction manuals, I’ve come to realize that the position entails so much more. Early in the program, I resonated with this definition: “technical communicators, produce documents in a variety of media to communicate complex and technical information. They employ theories and conventions of communication to develop, gather, and disseminate technical usable information among specific audiences such as customers, designers, and manufacturers” (Henning and Bemer 328). Rather than the image of a solitary writer sifting through a pile of discrete resources and toiling away at a singular draft, the writer engages in a myriad of communications with different people and tools in order to fulfill the needs of their users. With this, I became fascinated by not only the synthesis of practical skills, conceptual skills, and flexibility required but the “ability to do, the capacity to direct, and the strength to be influential” (Henning and Bemer 317) of a technical communicator. With this rather expansion notion of professional writing, I pursued research and projects in perhaps atypical realms of rhetoric and technical communication.

Considering the pandemic context of my time in the program, my scholarship gravitated toward the paradigm shift of remote work and online communication. My earliest scholarship explored the role of technical communicators in virtual workspaces as that situation was becoming the norm for so many with COVID-19 forcing everyone’s hands. I became fascinated
with how technical communicators were uniquely suited to facilitate these operations as essentially project managers, whether they were officially working in that capacity or not. There was already quite a bit of scholarship in that area, but technical communication in our contemporary online spaces is in flux as the internet and its multitude of offerings continues to rapidly change. My interest shifted to online forums, as I realized from research and observation that users nowadays don’t look to traditional documents for information but rather search for answers to specific questions through message boards and discussion threads. These spaces may or may not be moderated by professionally paid technical communicators, but users nonetheless trust the information enough to try it as the answers are often provided by people with some level of experience and expertise who care enough to share their knowledge for the benefit of others. This led me to consider the online spaces that facilitate video game players; although I only lightly dabble with gaming, I am surrounded by friends, colleagues, and students who partake in some form, with also quite a few employed in the industry.

Therefore, the substantive research project included in this portfolio is a case study exploring technical communication in an online community for gamers. While learning about different research methodologies in the program, I found case studies to be particularly elucidating as their analyses and conclusions were grounded in specific contexts and comprehensively acknowledged their applications and limitations. For my own case study, I examined a Facebook group for the social simulator Animal Crossing: New Horizons (ACNH), which was released and met with instantaneous ubiquity during the pandemic lockdown. Such online groups are maintained by volunteer moderators, who establish and enforce the norms and expectations of the group. While it is a casual space created for and by fans, the moderators and users abide by specific practices that reflect technical communication methods. Conducting a
content analysis of their documentation and correspondence, I found the interactions between users and the information they shared not only provided practical knowledge for playing the game but also enhanced their experience and affinity for the game and the community within and outside of it. This project affirmed my idea of technical communication as encompassing more than documentation found in office workplaces, and one of the defining aspects of the discipline is the collaborative nature of knowledge creation and maintenance. In my revision of this project, I sought to elaborate and clarify the overlap and connection between the metagaming practices of the video game community users and the role of technical communicators by improving the transitions between my different analytical claims and conclusions.

Similar to my first project, I was able to tap into some of my other personal interests for my other work. Aside from casual video gaming, I am intrigued by the rhetoric of the Korean pop music (KPOP) industry. Aside from English, my other undergraduate major was Asian Studies, and I maintain an intellectual curiosity in the social and cultural dynamics in Asian societies. Therefore, my second project is an analysis of the visual rhetoric of KPOP girl group music videos and the manifestations of potentially subversive feminist discourse within them. This essay infused several of my other theoretical interests in semiotics, deconstruction, gender studies, and film studies. Revising this project required an additional source to develop the “so what” behind my analysis and better connect it to the effect on the audience, both KPOP fans and the Korean society it originates and represents. The challenge with this revision was highlighting the social relevance of the analysis without diverting into superfluous descriptions of the girl groups’ real-world exploits that may detract from the messaging of the music videos as “texts.”

The revision process for the portfolio itself also solidified this mindset of writing as a project of ongoing testing and collaboration. The purpose of a document may vary, whether it be
to explain the circumstances behind a specific phenomenon in a given context, invoke precise emotions and trigger the imagination through descriptive narrative, or provide accessible information to complete a certain task; to improve any type of writing, however, involves interacting with readers and utilizing feedback for revision. I have appreciated the level of engagement and feedback from my instructors, reinforcing the ideology that “teachers need to offer assistance to student writers ‘when they are in the process of composing a text, rather than after the text has been completed’ because comments create ‘the motive for revising’” (Straub 6). This attention was consistent across all my classes and inspired the two smaller projects of my portfolio, the peer review form and student journalist manual.

For my peer review project, I developed forms to guide my student journalists through their feedback process. While technical communication and journalism are distinct disciplines, they are similar in that both types of writers produce and publish work to convey information for a specific audience in mind. Therefore, I felt that my academic pursuits in technical communication could be transferred to my advising and teaching journalism to high school students. This project was for my Teaching Writing class, which delved into writing ecologies and transferring skills across contexts. Initially, I experimented with implementing the peer review forms into my classroom, which was lightly discussed in the first iteration of my project. Since then, I have fully incorporated the practice into my classroom and my students have adapted to what Peter Elbow described as the “teacherless writing class” where the student writers learn to trust and rely upon one another for feedback. For my revised version of this project, I included a student sample and updated forms to represent my actual evolving experience with the procedure. I also expanded upon the reflections about the practical
implementation and the implications of this peer review process for my group of student journalists.

Further supporting my journalism class, I created a staff manual to guide their organizational operations and writing. As a part of my Technical Writing class, this manual was meant to serve my student journalists in establishing clear expectations for workflow and house style rules so that they could become more autonomous as a student-led publication. Rather than having me as a micromanaging adviser, students use this manual to support and maintain the organization. Technical writing often involves synthesizing preexisting information and resources to create new presentations and documentations that better serve the intended users.

When I inherited this class and publication, information was not consolidated and managed in a way to easily introduce new students to the course and acclimate the journalists to publication practices. In designing this manual, I analyzed the current needs of the publication and consulted different stakeholders and subject matter experts to determine the necessary knowledge that the project needed to contain, as well as completed usability testing on my editorial board to finalize the product. For this revision, I revised the manual to reflect the updated procedures and style decisions under the new editorial board, as I had also envisioned this to be a living document that would adapt to each new group of students and the evolutions of the publication. Also, when I initially conceived of this manual, it was a hefty and overbearing tome that was perhaps too much content for my target audience of high school students. Therefore, based on a suggestion from peer feedback, I have divided the manual into a “human resources” manual for on-boarding and a publication style handbook, so that the information is more digestible and accessible to users.
The work included in this portfolio is just the tip of the iceberg representing what I have gained in insight and accomplished during my time in the program. I have been fortunate enough to intertwine my personal intellectual and professional interests to enrich my understanding of technical communication and theoretical pedagogies. My scholarly research and synthesis skills have been refined through my explorations in technical writing and analytical writing. My efficacy as an educator has also improved as I have applied my work from various courses into my classroom, both in Journalism and my ELA courses, to enhance their understanding of writing, vocabulary, critical theories, and professional writing. After completing this, I hope to continue to challenge myself to grow as a scholar of rhetoric and find opportunities to infuse my intellectual passions and professional proficiencies wherever I go next.
Works Cited


Abstract
With video games no longer including manuals or significant technical documentation officially available with their games, players themselves have transitioned from simply being users to technical writers and collaborators. Online communities of video game users are a burgeoning site of technical communication research, as user-generated content is what most players read and use to facilitate their gaming experiences. Through a case study of the largest Facebook group for the popular social simulation game Animal Crossing: New Horizons (ACNH), the metagaming practices of community moderation and user knowledge sharing are elucidated through a descriptive content analysis of group documentation and forum threads. ACNH presents a unique case as the game demands players to solicit out-of-game interactions to make in-game experiences more meaningful and engaging. The Facebook group users demonstrate that the gameplay style of altruistic collaboration and user-defined narratives carryover into the online community interactions through free knowledge and resource sharing. The vast amount of untapped ACNH technical writing readily available to users demands further exploration to offer more insight on how other video game and similar products can encourage users to eagerly engage in creating and sharing technical communication of their own volition, improving the quality and experience of the overall product for all participants.

Introduction

Animal Crossing: New Horizons (ACNH) is an intriguing video game phenomenon that has exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic. Animal Crossing is classified as a life simulator or
social simulation video game, making it a particularly appealing option when it was released March 2020 just on the cusp of lockdowns worldwide. While *Animal Crossing* as a franchise, since its first release in 2001, has always been successful in the gaming community with four previous games and three spin-offs, *New Horizons* has become an indomitable crossover hit, maintaining their previous fanbase and expanding into the mainstream market. In its first year, *ACNH* sold 32.63 million copies, accounting for 39 percent of total Nintendo Switch game sales (Orland). As of February 2021, *New Horizons* reached a total of 37.62 million units sold, surpassing the total combined sales of all previous *Animal Crossing* console games (Kawase).

*ACNH* maintains the same basic structure of previous iterations: the player character moves into a new neighborhood, sparsely populated with anthropomorphic animal inhabitants and basic amenities, and is tasked with not only developing their own plot of land but improving the surrounding community as well. In *New Horizons*, after getting situated with a few bare essential items, the player is free to choose their course of action, whether that be harvesting the natural resources of the island to potentially earn currency or craft better tools, catching wildlife to develop their personal database or donate to the local museum collection, befriending the other villagers in hopes of revealing their unique personality quirks, or customizing the home décor or avatar appearance. As the player completes more personal achievements or assigned missions, the opportunity to further design the island to fit the player’s creative vision and unlock more features continues the momentum of the game. While *ACNH* starts as a single-player game, interacting and trading with other players becomes a fundamental aspect of gameplay. Additionally, with its tropical theme and cartoonish aesthetics, the game provides comforting escapism to players who also gain personal gratification from rewards for completing virtual chores and socialization. It is not surprising then that this game provided a salve during the
pandemic lockdown when people were restricted from physical contact with others and confined to their homes.

The prevailing popularity of *ACNH* and its unique exigence has inspired much scholarship into the game’s mechanics and its appeal on players. Tong, et al. highlights some of the unique social dynamics created in *ACNH* that separate it from other multiplayer online games. The in-game environment is rather private for an open-world game, as players require access codes to visit other player islands and the limit is 8 players in any single session. Therefore, the impetus is on the player to proactively invite or seek invitation from other live players if they want to be able to reap the benefits of outside resources (for instance, each island grows only one native fruit so to be able to harvest others, one must either buy the seeds or get a starter plant elsewhere) or socialization opportunities. Although players can occupy themselves with various missions and milestones like collecting flora, fauna, and furniture, players are not required to complete specific game-determined narratives. Due to the loose open-world nature of the game, players possess a lot of agency within their gaming experience. Players have the flexibility to create their own narratives, which are facilitated by non-game interactions like communicating with other players outside the game realm to coordinate events, exchange items or advice, and share anecdotes. In addition, they include that the “mundane and repetitive nature of video games support social interactions because individuals seek more engaging and enjoyable plays through socialization with others” (Tong, et al. 3). The possibility of *ACNH* becoming a monotonous stream of menial tasks is quite high, demanding players to interact with other players to develop further opportunities for progression in feature unlocking and storytelling.

The *ACNH* creators have specifically declared their intentions for the game as an experience centered around players sharing knowledge with one another as part of the immersive fun that
transcends typical gaming paradigms: “Animal Crossing is a communication game…whether it’s through playing with other people or talking enthusiastically about the game” (MacDonald). Interestingly though, ACNH limits its communication options as players are only allowed to type text and select animated avatar expressions, both of which are highly inconvenient to utilize with a Switch controller for any impromptu conversation or in-depth discourse in the game environment. To truly optimize the gaming experience, players must seek out outside information and social activities beyond the game world, leading to the multitude of online communities across different social media platforms. While this practice is prevalent for any game, the structure of ACNH specifically demands out-of-game communication and socialization with others to enhance the play experience and make meaning within the game.

By examining gameplay elements, Benti and Stadtmann conclude that playing ACNH satisfies growth-motivated needs, as dictated by Maslow’s hierarchy as cognitive, esthetic, and self-actualization needs, in real world lives. This psychological approach informs the motivations of users, especially when analyzing their interactions in online spaces like the Facebook group or Youtube communities meant to facilitate their in-game experience. Moderators for such groups explicitly announce that their commitment to the role is driven by game expertise and a desire to maintain a cohesive community; they are volunteering their time, rather than getting paid professionally as a part of their job. Chang and Chuang found that members with a perception of fairness, a sense of belonging, and who utilize the same lexicon typically provide high-quality knowledge to the community and act as moderators by effectively coordinating events and connecting members together. Matching the spirit of the game, the community of the Facebook group is about creating and sharing with one another, which corresponds with the collaborative mode of technical communication. Technical communication within the video game community is still a burgeoning field of research, but
specifically the effect of online fan communities and their practices requires further exploration. Araki and Carliner also highlight the delivery of technical and learning information for users of virtual worlds as an avenue for technical communicators to research metagaming practices and “advocate support for these informal communication channels and develop tools for facilitating them” (255).

For clarity, “users” will refer to the participants of the Facebook group; “players” will be employed when discussing their activity within ACNH the game. I will be analyzing the user interactions and technical writing created and shared on a fan-created Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/ACNewHorizons) for the video game Animal Crossing New Horizons (ACNH). My research questions include:

- How does the user-generated content within this online space affect individuals’ experience with the game and the community?
- How does the user-generated content supplement or supplant official technical communication?
- How do moderators adopt the role as lead technical communicators?
- How do users learn and conform to group communication norms to enhance content creation and knowledge sharing?

My research will take an interpretivist approach with descriptions of user behavior on the Facebook group. By examining the posts and interactions, I want to understand what “metagaming practices” or methods of moderation and facilitation enhances users’ gaming experience. Especially since there is limited technical writing from the video game developers or Nintendo publicly available, it would be valuable for the future of technical communication about video games and other industries that produce products with similar user bases to examine where and what kind of information users seek out on a community like a Facebook group.
Literature Review

*ACNH* is a virtual space that blends the game world and the social world. While game and social worlds share common characteristics, such as a shared space, graphical user interface, immediacy, interactivity, persistence, and socialization with community, game worlds possess unique elements like advancement systems, risks and danger, and personalized content, whereas social worlds are open-ended environments that avatars occupy with no externally provided goals. The social world of *ACNH* encompasses both the islands that players maintain and visit within the game and the communication spaces outside the game provided by social media platforms, since so much of players’ experience with the game has been defined by the pandemic restrictions of limited in-person interactions and allowance for unlimited online presences and communication. My research focus is primarily on paratextual development, which “takes place outside of the game worlds themselves but build on the environmental actions,” and looking at the “socially motivated para-texts and documentation” of the Facebook group (Eyman 247).

Considering that most documentation falls under “stabilization knowledge,” which standardizes information, it is compelling to examine documentation, as Swarts defines it, that is more oriented toward “possibility knowledge” or agent-based information that is developed and implemented extemporaneously. Swarts also concludes that, although user content contributes to the generation of quality content, making these places highly accessible, moderators use their primary and secondary technical communication skills to enhance usability of not only the software but the forum itself. Evident in this case study, the manner at hand is assessing and identifying what counts as primary and secondary technical communication skills. Due to the waning practice of including printed game manuals with video game purchases, there has been an impetus for increased technical writing amongst gamers online: “a social situation that calls for a rhetorical response” (Mason 220). As
Eyman’s third element of his ecological framework, documentation is the most prominent “metagaming” practice under consideration. Mason defines some of the genres within the genre ecology of online gaming that would be worth exploring as all these exist on the Facebook group and official Nintendo site in some form: guidebooks, technical descriptions, social group policies, tutorials, FAQs, maps, reviews, and end-user licensing agreements. For the purpose of my study, I will examine the Facebook group’s policies, FAQs, technical descriptions, and guide material presented by the moderators and the users, either as pinned threads or discussion posts.

Finseth notes 24 distinct genres of technical communication within games-based affinity spaces and participatory cultures, defined as having low barriers for expression, engagement, and mentorship. While there are several wiki pages, online tools, and discussion forums available, Facebook demands a less anonymous and extemporaneous profile for participation and less formal knowledge of website design or programming to establish and maintain the space, since Facebook readily offers a platform with easy templates for casual use. Considering the assumed likelihood of social loafing and free-riding in such an environment though, Norbutas and Corten observe that users are more likely to participate in exchanges as they witness and learn the group norms, motivated to preserve the integrity of the community. One can assume that, within the ACNH Facebook group, users start with reacting and commenting on threads and then gradually work their way up to being authors of posts that fit the group norms. Users may post offers for collectibles and price events on their personal islands to allow others to acquire free opportunities, which contribute to the maintenance of the group as a rewarding space and sustain interest in playing the game. In the ACNH Facebook group, a crossover of resources, which occurs when an individual can receive resources offered without a required personal investment of resources, and a commerce of resources, where “members enrich their resource pool through cooperative actions” (Braasch
105), contribute to the sustainability of the group, as well as support the communal coping that the game also offered in the context of the pandemic. Knowledge is constructed collaboratively and intersectionally (transmedia) in the spirit of enhancing the gaming experience and community for all, which is the shared rhetorical situation of the authors and participants. Authors are motivated by personal connections, professional connections, and reputation.

**Methodology**

Taking the Facebook group as a single case study for user-generated technical communication outside the game world, this will be qualitative research with descriptive content analysis. Flyvbjerg argues for the efficacy of case-study research as providing opportunities for depth of understanding and context-based knowledge. Particularly, Kuhn’s paradigmatic case, as described in Flyvbjerg’s work, defines my approach with *ACNH*, as most technical communication utilized for the game is created by users rather than the official production company itself. I have joined the Facebook group as a member to access their writings and observe their interactions. The group requires moderator approval before joining, but the standards are not intimidating. The “About this group” page stipulates that “your join request will only be accepted if your account is over 3 months old, you have answered all questions and ticked the box to agree to the rules!” The entry survey serves to curtail potential spam or scam bots from entering the space; it is a brief 2-question constructed response form that acts as a group rules agreement. The plentiful amount of discussion among a vast number of different participants in an authentic and natural environment dissuaded me from any need to conduct interviews, as moments of metagaming practices could be observed firsthand.

While there are many different Facebook groups dedicated to *ACNH*, the selected group claims to be the first created and boasts the highest userbase. The group counts approximately 316,000 members and has remained consistently active since the group’s creation in June 2018 in response to
the announcement of an *Animal Crossing* game coming to the Nintendo Switch (Based on the “Transparency” information on the group’s “About” tab, the original name of the group was “Animal Crossing Switch Hype” which changed accordingly based on subsequent news of the game’s official title). As a private group that requires members to complete a brief form for acknowledgement and approval purposes before admission, the group policies are prominently displayed (i.e. pinned at the top of the feed) and mentioned frequently by moderators and users alike across posts. Aside from reviewing the group policies and FAQ, which were last updated on November 11, 2021, I have selected 7 representative discussion posts across 5 days (March 25th-March 29th). The time frame surrounds a weekend, which typically shows higher user engagement. In addition, the spring season within the game begins February 25th, so the posts reflect users having experienced a month of new gameplay updates, as each season brings and eliminates unique items and events for players. Considering the seasonal variations introduced, both experienced and new players are more likely to participate in continuous discussion about the change in gameplay, looking to either inform, learn, or refine their in-game practices.

Further supported by the conclusions of Hsieh, et al., frequent content updates and new collectible item opportunities are factors that most enhanced player retention within *ACNH*. With “313 (70 fossils, 80 bugs, 80 fish, 40 deep sea creatures, and 43 art objects) in the most recent *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*” game (Bailey 8), the task of collecting is laborious and time-consuming, but it is one of the mission opportunities within the game that users typically cannot ignore due to the ability to unlock more features. Therefore, the representative posts were chosen due to their focus on curation and collection, as well as selected to encompass a variety of gameplay concerns for users. While I am a member of the group, I participated in none of the posts and merely just observed the group and collected data. Specific user demographics were not considered in
selection, as the focus was on document analysis and identity, other than as an *Animal Crossing* player, is not a concern for users during online interactions. All users discussed will also therefore remain anonymous. However, all group users are at least 18-years-old, as that is one of the membership requirements. The possibility of younger users in the group is high as the only means of checking the group employs is the initial membership form that asks for user consent and acknowledgement, but this is not a concern for this study, as the interactions are presumed to be amongst consenting adults within the context of the group. Rather than being absolutely comprehensive, the selection of content is meant to represent the type of knowledge and interactions shared in these types of online communities dedicated to a game world and gain a more thorough understanding of the ways casual users engage in technical communication and content moderation with one another.

The sample includes 7 original discussion posts with a cumulative total of 382 comments:

- March 25: Sharing images of user’s project “Baskin Robbins 31 Flavors” inspired décor (33 comments)
- March 26: Poll about daily gift for villagers to garner enough favor to eventually receive their photograph as a collectible (127 comments)
- March 26: Sharing about missing a single museum piece and asking for others to share similar stories (44 comments)
- March 27: Free giveaway with attached video to show bounty of items available on their individual island (91 comments)
- March 28: Asking for tips to grow blue roses, a “rare” hybrid variation (17 comments)
- March 29: Inquiring for clarification about max number of star fragments able to be obtained from a single meteor shower event (20 comments)
• March 29: Confusion over “Dream” removal from Nintendo for “obscene and/or sexual expression” violation with email screenshot (50 comments)

Upon narrowing down the selection of documents to analyze for this study, I began by examining the group rules document to better ascertain during my discussion post analysis how those policies are demonstrated through user interactions, whether the rules are being followed, enforced, and subverted. Then, I examined the FAQ document and categorized the question stems (7 types) and answer trends in phrasing and format. Reading the initial FAQ allowed me to also select user posts that may not have been addressed by the FAQ; for the most part though, users abide by the community protocol to not post redundant information already covered elsewhere. For the 7 discussion posts, I also developed a coding system for recurring themes and patterns of behavior to describe the types of information users seek and ways in which users show their engagement with it.

Findings & Discussion

Enumerating and Commiserating Unclear Game Mechanics

The types of questions frequently asked in the sample selection indicate that the game offers the bare minimum of instructional tutorials within the game, encouraging players to either experiment on their own or seek guidance elsewhere. Due to the common industry practice of eliminating printed game manuals, video games require tutorial segments to explain how players are supposed to interact with the graphical interface using their controllers. Beyond pressing the right buttons to access menus and control avatars on screen, ACNH provides little guidance to explain the numerous rotating events and interactive elements, aside from informing the player of their existence. Rather than extensive trial-and-error, players choose to find answers from other experienced users through the Facebook group. Explicitly mentioned in the group rules, before posting for advice on the public discussion wall, users are instructed to consult the group’s FAQ section first.
While there are six different sections on the FAQ with more than 50 different questions answered, the way the questions are phrased fall into these categories in order of frequency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Stem</th>
<th>Number of Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to do I do something or make it happen?</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this possible?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define or explain an in-game concept or parameter to me.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often or when does this happen?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I doing something wrong?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I do something (that may ruin my gaming experience)?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does everyone experience this like me?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top four frequent question stems illustrate that users primarily seek what Swarts deemed as standardized knowledge, stable information about the game mechanics. While there are straightforward answers to most of these stabilized questions (i.e. press this button, complete these events to unlock, wait three days for this), an appreciable trend in the answers was essentially “try this and it may or may not work,” “it is random so be patient,” and “it doesn’t make sense, but accept that this is the way the game works.” Answers are largely written in a similar conversational prose; the moderators also include hyperlinks to other online sources, including Redditt threads, wikis, calculator tools, and standalone fan-sites. Aside from providing more extensive and specialized information that a few sentences from the moderators cannot adequately address, these additional sources typically corroborate their statements about the randomness and obfuscation within the game.
One would ordinarily assume that such ambiguous responses would elicit dissatisfaction among users, but the moderators’ explicit and frequent acknowledgements of this inherent quality of the game tempers potential user frustration over a lack of clear answers provided by the group and player apprehension over deliberately unspoken game mechanics. This lack of disclosure seems to promote a sense of discovery and wonder, as users frequently comment about their in-game experiences being defined by instances of unpredictability and unexpected surprises, such as when players finally encounter their long-awaited missing item that completes their collection. Even though many users found reassurance and pleasure in uncertainty, weariness of unintended consequences negatively affecting gameplay were still nonetheless expressed by users in posts, evident in the last three question stems that lean into users’ dearth of knowledge.

Three of the seven sample discussion posts are inquiries seeking clarification on unclear game mechanics: advice on growing hybrid blue roses, max number of star fragments for a meteor shower event, and “Dream” removal for apparent terms of service violation. The “blue roses” poster admitted that they were confused about not seeing any progress after trying different techniques from several YouTube tutorials; even after 16 commenters posted various alternative solutions (i.e. offers to gift a starter plant, aid with a special watering can, other YouTube tutorials, etc.), the poster responded with an update that they simply persisted with their initial crossbreeding technique and it eventually bore the desired blue roses. Although the poster did not heed any of the advice from community users, they still used the group to seek guidance and affirmation for their method of playing. Similarly, the “star fragments” poster was worried that they did something wrong because they did not receive the expected number of star fragments: “Have I missing something? Does this game hate me?”. Of the 20 comments, five users replied that the max number for any single event was 20 and the poster replied in thanks to each one. One of these clarifiers even posted a screenshot of a table from a Wiki to rationalize
the limitation [Figure 1] as a game mechanic that encourages socialization amongst players. Even though the poster indicated closure on their issue by thanking the commenters for effectively addressing their confusion, subsequent commenters expressed that they were not aware of the 20-fragment maximum and expressed that they had “learned something new” from reading the thread. Although the original posters were initially frustrated over seemingly wasting time working towards extra rewards the game was never going to give them, the tone of the original posters and all the commenters consistently stayed positive and grateful for one another’s input.

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 1* Commenter providing a Wiki screenshot to justify the maximum number of "star fragments" as a mechanism to encourage external solicitation for in-game socialization.

Alternatively, the attitude of the “Dream poster” and their commenters stayed exasperated, but their frustration was targeted at company Nintendo, not one another. The “Dream” poster inquired about the possibility of their overall Nintendo account getting banned if their “Dream address” (a code to visit a replica of a player island that can be shared online) gets reported and removed a second time. Attaching email screenshots, they specified that there was “no profanity or offensive designs” on their
island that would trigger a content removal, but their main concern was attributed to the notion that Nintendo does not investigate any reports before issuing violations. Five of the 50 comments expressed that they did not share their dream addresses publicly for this very reason but offered no clarifying insight on the outcome of a second citation. Six commenters shared their own personal experiences with bans over trivial content, including marijuana references, LGBTQ+ identification, other video game terms, and nudity from the in-game art collectibles (i.e. statue of David). Many of the posts echoed the sentiment that they lacked faith in the efficacy of Nintendo’s reporting and investigation system. No clear reasoning or consequences were provided in this thread, but the users engaged in a form of communal coping that provides individuals with social support through the sharing of knowledge and common experiences (Braasch et al. 102).

Another area in which the group provides an outlet for users to voice their grievances and desires is the pinned threads is “GameUpdates,” which users often respond with wanted features not yet included in the game. Although such groups like the one under study emphasize that they are not officially affiliated in any way with Nintendo and thus their posts have no bearing on the development of the games, discussions surrounding the game design and apparent wish lists of features are brought up on the forum and serve as the initial grumblings amongst the crowd that the game developers may eventually hear in the wider community, eventually adopting some of their suggestions. Even if their complaints and requests are never officially logged or acknowledged by Nintendo or the game-developers, the users discussing them amongst one another feels validating.

Although complaints overall are not as prevalent in the group discussions, such concerns as the ones examined above reveal that the game instills insecurity amongst players that they may not be playing it appropriately, despite the nature of the game being largely player-motivated narratives rather
than game-determined goals. The need for external reassurance compels players to online communities like the Facebook group, and user engagement with the group contributes to those player-generated narratives. As users devise their own personal narratives to justify the completion of specific goals, like attaining elusive items like blue hybrid roses or star fragments, that come with no in-game congratulation, they find their sense of affirmation and fulfillment from the way other players respond by acting as proxy witnesses to their achievements. Through the interactions and socialization between users on the group, players enhance their perception of self-actualization, helping to sustain their interest and investment in both the in-game environment and the extra-game community of the group.

*Moderating Toward a Kindergarten of Adults*

The pinned threads by the moderators illustrate Karabinus and Atherton’s ideas about collaborative communication and documentation in amateur game design communities. Although the group is not centered around game design, its practices in maintaining acceptable discourse and enhancing user experience echo their study with the curation of external resources and strategy documents (Karabinus and Atherton 268). Particularly, the moderators do much work in ensuring that the culture within the group remains intact. Fourteen volunteer moderators (“modmins”) monitor the Facebook group. The maintenance of a space conducive for sharing stabilized knowledge and experiential insight is the primary goal of the group moderators. Despite *ACNH*’s bright and buoyant aesthetic [Figure 2] that marks it as a child-friendly game, the Facebook group is designated for adults and the moderators note that the space is not a “family friendly group,” so mentions of sex, drugs, and profanity are allowed. Acknowledging the intended audience and consistently reminding users of that fact curtails disgruntled posters from souring the environment with their concerns over age-appropriateness and calls for unwarranted content censorship. The moderators have also painstakingly listed permitted and forbidden activities to minimize future indiscretions.
Clearly delineated expectations of behavior foster an online space where users feel comfortable and safe to initiate and interact with one another. Similar to Chang and Chuang’s findings, it was apparent from analyzing post exchanges that reputation and social interaction were not significant motivators for ACNH group moderators or users, and altruistic tendencies were high due to a strong communal sense of reciprocity and identification with the group.

*Figure 2* Sample post of user sharing their Baskin Robbins décor garners hundreds of positive reactions.
The “Admin Group Rules” emphasizes three main principles: (1) zero tolerance of discriminatory language and bigotry, (2) reserving the right to remove unrelated, redundant, or sensitive material from the group, and (3) any advertisement or solicitation that involves real life currency requires pre-approval. While the linguistic style is conversational and informal, the guidelines are explicitly authoritative, albeit always expressing in the best interest of harmony for the group. In a pinned post under “Updates,” the administrator reiterates the group policy and clarifies the group stance on “controversial” game practices, including modifying one’s Nintendo Switch internal clock system to “time travel” in the game and incorporating unofficial modifications into one’s copy of the game (referenced in the post as the “Mario update”). In her post [Figure 3], the moderator emphasizes that the purpose of the group is to enhance other’s gaming experience, not to pass judgment or dictate the most appropriate way to play. While their tone in the post is clearly annoyed, this attitude conveys that they had trust in the community to be mature adults that has been broken but is not irreparable. The message conveyed is clear: an issue has been identified within the community, and the moderators have been dealing with it the best they can, but now they must come to a new understanding with the users to continue to protect the integrity of their shared environment. Pronouncement of immediate expulsion from the group underscores that the moderators acknowledge they were at fault for allowing leniency, and they admit that now firm reinforcement of the group policies must be enacted.

Figure 4 aggregates most of the different sentiments shared in the comments to the original post: user conduct expectations and the value of the shared community provided by the group that the author does not wish to be tainted by deviant behavior. The poster mentioned that her sense of achievement within the game was enhanced by her ability to share it with the group. Demonstrating appreciation for the moderator’s role reinforces their authority but also validates their efforts in maintaining the established group rules and community norms.
Something we don’t allow in this group is leaving negative, hurtful comments towards other members and mods over some virtual furniture items. We are all adults and should be able to act as such. You may not agree with time travel/modding and that is fine! That is your own preference. But it is not okay to attack others for how they choose to play their game.

Time travelling is not cheating. Going to treasure islands is not cheating. You can’t cheat in a non-competitive game. Our members paid for their Switch and AC copy, so they should be able to play it however they please. If Nintendo doesn’t want you to time travel, they would’ve taken away the ability to years ago.

If you have nothing nice to say, then please say nothing at all. It is extremely exhausting and frustrating having to sit all day long sorting out this drama. We have been mostly handing out mutes so far, but from here on out if you start nasty arguments, attack others or create negative vibes related to the Mario update then you will be removed from the group instantly.

*Figure 3 Screenshot of Administrator Message pinned under UPDATES (February 27, 2021)*

Yeah I also have to echo the sentiment of the first person here... the fact that the admin had to tell adults to stop being nasty over a kids video game is quite sad! Have to admit when I saw all the nasty comments I was tempted to actually leave this group as it made me sad. We come here to chill and to socialize, meet new people and have fun. Respect is key, how one chooses to play is their choice and I loved the community! I was SO chuffed the other day because I completed my entire museum and just had to share that with the community, silly thing yes but it felt like such an accomplishment and sharing on this group and getting applauded was just lovely. And that’s what we all want and need, especially during a pandemic, support and a sense of community! So thank you admin for this post. Agree or disagree, but let’s just go back to basic human values of being kind, Lord knows there can never be enough of kindness in this world! 😊

*Figure 4 Screenshot of a user response to original message excerpted in Figure 3*
The frequent references to the fact that *ACNH* is labeled as a “kid’s game” also highlights that the group values the child-like ideals of “sharing is caring” and “the golden rule of kindness.” Group interactions demonstrate that same desire to transplant those idyllic altruistic values from the game into their social world behavior. In conjunction with collecting items, gifting is a prominent gameplay feature. The sample discussion post with a poll about daily gifts for non-player character (NPC) villagers received 127 comments of users chiming in. NPCs are computer-generated entities, but users often attribute more personality and agency to them as if they were sentient beings. While giving gifts to NPCs eventually bears some reward, specifically villager photographs that can only be obtained after currying enough favor from the villager, most commenters discussed personal preference rather than optimization for the sake of receiving the photo collectible faster. While there was a consensus established about the most efficient means of acquiring the photo (gift-wrapped fossils identified and assessed by the museum within the game), the majority of commenters were merely interested in sharing their joy in seeing the villagers display the gifts in their home or receiving gifts in return from the villager, no matter how cheap or redundant the item given by the NPC. Users were interested in crafting their own narratives and sharing them with others of commiserate experience.

In the “museum piece” discussion post, the original poster shared that they were on an endless search for a single museum piece to complete their collection, but rather than seek help from the group, the poster just wanted to hear similar stories. Adding a cozy and confiding atmosphere to the thread, the poster emulated “Dear Reader” letters by concluding their post with “Signed, Frustrated in Modesto.” The first 3 commenters offered to gift the poster with the missing piece, demonstrating a prevalent trend of generosity within the group; addendums, however, were shortly provided as the commenters realized that the poster did not want anything from anyone except their stories, since the original poster clearly stated they wanted to discover the missing piece organically in the game on their own. The
thread generated a total of 44 comments, each of which the poster acknowledged either through text reply or reactions (i.e. heart, thumbs-up). The poster’s continuous engagement with each commenter to their thread showcases investment in the community, as their heightened participation in casual discussions and storytelling foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie amongst faceless strangers. Also, the original poster’s interactions with users also constitutes as moderation, although not in any official capacity like the designated group moderators, as they presided over the comment thread to facilitate further discussion and invigorate the thread.

Another method of sharing to improve not only the individual but the collective experience is through in-game screenshots, which allow users to access other players’ experiences in the social world without actually joining them in the game world. They provide tangible (albeit still virtual) evidence of in-game accomplishments that users can validate and applaud. The “Baskin Robbins” post of six screenshots received 405 reactions and 33 comments [Figure 2]. This image post received the most varied forms of engagement of all the sample posts. Five users tagged other group users to call attention to this post, with one tagged recipient replying to the post in admiration. There was a total of 18 comments merely expressing congratulations and appreciation toward the poster’s inspiration and diligence in crafting the themed room. Four inquiries about specific items or techniques utilized were made; two commenters noted they had done something similar, and the original poster replied to each one with advice and approbation. Of the sample discussion posts, this was the only one that a “Group Expert” or moderator commented on; they offered similar commendations as users did rather than exercise any authoritative stance. Aside from a title marker by their name that Facebook designates to moderators, their comments blend in with the rest of the community. In discussion board posts, moderators and users interact seamlessly without regard for any preconceived hierarchy. Users freely generate the content and set the tone for the thread.
Another common occurrence within the group that promotes the altruistic participation is giveaways. While *ACNH* has two different currency systems (bells and Nook Miles), players can engage in trades with other players. However, players often simply gift items; the precedence is set within the game by villagers spontaneously giving items to the player randomly. The group policies explicitly mention that users are allowed to post opportunities for free items on a first-come, first-serve basis. The exchange of real-life currency for in-game merchandise is strictly forbidden in the group rules, as it would be a violation of Nintendo terms of service as well. Although users have expressed dissatisfaction with official Nintendo policy and lack of oversight, the group nonetheless obliges and disavows any potentially illegal activity, which inevitably shields the moderators and the group as a whole from any culpability. The sample post about a giveaway garnered 39 different users commenting their interest in participating. Culminating in 91 total comments to the thread, the original poster replied to each one, often engaging in a back-and-forth exchange to arrange times and clarify item requests. The poster even replied to several later participants that they were currently having connectivity issues but could accommodate them later in the week, which they eventually did as evidenced in their replies a few days after the initial posting.

This poster adopted the typical function of a moderator by coordinating events and interacting with users to ensure their inquiries were being addressed. Like the “museum piece” poster, this casual poster had no formal obligation to respond and fulfill each commenter’s request, as giveaway posts are entirely voluntary and at the discretion of the user, but they spent hours communicating and troubleshooting with other group users. These posters and the interactions demonstrate a commitment within the group to fostering an intimate and productive space for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer reciprocity.

**Conclusion**
The *ACNH* Facebook group showcases an ideal case of positive participatory culture within an online video game community. “The virtual environment is not only a structure for interaction but also a shared cultural space” that showcase the necessity for users to adopt the role of technical communicator to negotiate and maintain to fully reap the benefits and knowledge provided by the group (Darics and Gatti 242). While the game may possess undesirable (or lack of) features and the group has some issues with deviant users, the environment sustained by the users is highly conducive to open knowledge sharing and validating affirmations that enhance individuals’ experience with the game and the community surrounding it. The equalizing effect of the online space “downplays status differences among [group] members” (Darics and Gatti 253), which facilitates the formation of a collective identity. Whether one has the “moderator” title or not, participation in technical communication practices are an intrinsic part of the metagaming experience. Especially in a virtual setting, the efficacy of the group relies on emotional investment, as empathy and the construction of robust bonds are “an important prerequisite in achieving productive cooperation and commitment based upon the shared belief that the [group] can succeed” (Darics and Gatti 254). Particularly commiserating over disappointing or confusing game experiences and storytelling are key features found in the group that inspires the most user engagement.

Official technical communication from Nintendo or the game developers is rarely mentioned, except in a derogatory fashion, as moderators and users alike prefer content generated by other users. While the moderators address community norms and policies, the users themselves may take on the role of lead technical communicators, as they dictate the direction of discussions through their posts and comments. Ongoing research about technical communicators continue to highlight the dynamism and flexibility of skill and assets, particularly “focusing on
interpersonal skills, taking a systematic approach to work, and using the appropriate media for each situation” (Shalamova, et al 16), which are demonstrated by the sample posts in this study. The original posters of a thread never abandoned their threads but would continuously interact with new commenters until the post would eventually “die” with posts having an average life span of eight days before it garnered no new updates. Sustaining a user-centered technical communication community involves active users invested in engaging with other users; in a sense, users who post need to become moderators. More than likely, users start as passive observers, then begin reacting to posts, and gradually comment on them. Once confident enough after being inspired by other user behavior, they create their own posts and facilitate the interactions in the thread that may only be occurring in the social world of the Facebook group or extend into the game world of ACNH by visiting islands for giveaways or watering plants to increase the likelihood of blue roses. In March 2021, when this study was originally initiated, 12 designated moderators were listed on the Facebook group; in November 2022, the number had grown to 14. Users can be promoted to become official moderators, but as observed in the sample posts, users already actively do the work of leading and performing technical communication practices as standard norms in the group. Witnessing the act of a group member at work, even if not actively interacting with them, increases a members’ cognitive willingness to engage in the work itself. Rather than these instances being outliers, these posts represent a common trend seen among group users to consistently engage with others to ensure that all communications are acknowledged. The online space with its established norms and practices facilitates these video game players to become technical communicators in their own right, as they create, manage, and share information to fulfill the needs of other group users.
This case study was very limited in its scope, as it only focused on three group documents and seven discussion post threads. However, despite the small sample, the opportunity for more user-generated technical communication within video game online communities is apparent, as this study only examined a five-day span of content and interactions.
Works Cited


Framing Female Subjectivity in KPOP: CLC and (G)I-DLE Confronting the Gaze

“Feminist” is a disparaged title in South Korea, evident in instances where catching sight of any inkling of personal feminist sympathies leads to Korean popular music (KPOP) idols like Red Velvet Irene’s “fans allegedly burn[ing] photos of the star and [getting] rid of merchandise featuring her image, criticizing her solely for her seemingly feminist reading preferences” (Herman). In a society beholden to Confucian patriarchal ideology, pronouncements of female empowerment in mainstream culture are discouraged and defamed (H. Kim 247). However, the girl groups under Cube Entertainment, a production company that promotes their stars as “artists” rather than just “idols,” confront and interrogate the standard of Korean femininity through their lyricism and imagery in their music videos.

Specifically, the images in CLC’s “Me” and (G)I-DLE’s “LION,” both released in 2019, acknowledge audience interactions that treat female bodies as sexualized or fetishized spectacle, but the myth constructed in the music videos seek to liberate the subjects from that female mold and demand to be seen as individuals of stature and self-ownership. Groups such as CLC and (G)I-DLE would be considered amongst Koreans “sseun-unni,” which literally translates to “tough older sister” but implies a brazen woman who embodies rebellious characteristics, thus remaining outside of the feminine norms” (Lee and Yi 21), or “girl crush,” the more ubiquitous nomenclature within the international KPOP fandom.

“GIRL CRUSH”

To clarify, “girl crush” concepts explicitly boast images of strong independent young women and themes of female agency and edgy nonconformism that are meant to garner platonic
admiration from female fans. “Girl crush” has gained prominence over the traditional cutesy ingenue concept and sexy female body concepts of the past decade. Figure 1 illustrates a few notable examples of the former, “hypergirlish-femininity that prioritizes submissiveness, pureness, and cuteness” (Oh, “The Politics of the Dancing Body” 56). Particularly in Girls’ Generation’s 2009 “Gee” music video, “female subjectivity and sexuality can only be activated and realized through the male gaze and male affection” and subsequent girl group music videos continue that tradition of “fetishiz[ing] a symbolic construction of childhood innocence as a mere sexual object, as its violation is regarded as a goal in the sexual politics of the patriarchal status quo” (G. Kim, “K-Pop Idol Girl Groups” 205). Early groups like Girls’ Generation emphasized the concept of “baglayeo,” a woman with a “face like fresh fruit” (i.e. clean and ripe, ready to be eaten) and “displays her body in a sensual way that caters to men’s fantasies” (Chang 74). Figure 2 highlights those that lean into the sexual objectification of the girls: “what makes her visible is determined by male desire” (Oh, “The Politics of the Dancing Body” 57).

The term “girl crush” is defined as a woman’s non-sexual or non-romantic attraction and admiration toward another female. Specifically in the realm of KPOP, “there isn’t really a specific sound to ‘girl crush’ – it functions more as a descriptor of both visuals and message, to varying degrees” (Kelley). “Girl crush” is marketed towards a young adult female demographic that boasts exponential spending potential, rather than an older male audience. Girl groups were originally and traditionally designed to appeal to a heteronormative male demographic, but their market pull has significantly declined in the last decade, so catering to that patronage has diminished in its efficacy amongst production companies as the creative direction has also moved out of the hands of middle-aged men (Chang 74). Men are still a significant portion of the listenership, but locking in a female following means sustained sales popularity in the fickle
KPOP landscape. Rather than pandering to the male gaze as those other popular concepts for girl groups, “girl crush” taps into the female aspiration for power, agency, and maturity.

*Figure 1* TOP "Gee" by Girls' Generation. MIDDLE "Closer" by OH MY GIRL. BOTTOM "TT" by TWICE. These MVs capture the male fantasy of pliant girls and coy virgins.
These MVs cater to the male gaze in the sexualization of the female idol’s bodies.
These groups appeal with their “girl crush” concepts, demonstrating bold attitudes and chic stylishness.
Due to the nebulous definition, girl groups can perform the “girl crush” concept in different ways: “anything that conveys the image of ferocity, stepping outside the expectations of hyperfemininity. But, ultimately, ‘girl crush’ concepts amount to more abstract ideas of relatability, aspiration and female empowerment” (Kelley). The most prevalent markers of “girl crush” include dark aesthetics and charismatic sangfroid: a sense of confident self-possession that may translate into “sexy,” “angry,” or “powerful” (Chang 75). In the late 2010s, groups such as BLACKPINK, MAMAMOO, Dreamcatcher, and EVERGLOW almost exclusively don “girl crush” concepts (Figure 3), while most contemporary girl groups eventually employ the “girl crush” concept for certain promotional periods (Red Velvet, Girls’ Generation, EXID) or evolve their group image into “girl crush” territory (GFriend, TWICE, Loona, or Oh My Girl). The desire for individualistic autonomy in the context of a restrictive society is one of the underlying thematic concerns of the “girl crush” concept, as fans seek the narrative of criticizing “an unequal society created by a coercive masculinity, calling for a louder voice for women who have been traditionally oppressed” (Chang 76).

THE FEMININE

More often than not though, despite boasting a “girl crush” image, the content of the lyrics and imagery still cater to the male gaze, defining the female subjects as sexualized objects of desire or preoccupied with heterosexual romantic relationships. No matter how fierce and independent they may proclaim to be, the visual rhetoric of these girl groups still relies on patriarchal approval and implicit subservience. However, CLC’s “ME” and (G)I-DLE’s “LION” distinctly lack a male presence. The music videos pass the “Bechdel Test,” which seeks to measure whether named female subjects talk with one another about something unrelated to a man, in its representation of women with their own subjecthood, rather than defined by their
relationships with men. The lyrics of the song also do not specifically define a gender in its address. Yet, gendered difference is still on display, as masculine animal imagery is present in the video as symbolic reminders of the dominant male narrative that the subjects occupy, nonetheless.

For instance, only male lions, evident in their manes, are depicted in the “LION” MV. Their image is seen as both statues and live lions on pedestals and roaming about the halls of the museum setting. The positioning suggests these male lions are revered for their dignified authority. However, claw marks on member Soojin’s shoulder in her solo scenes suggest that the male lions or perhaps even herself with the artificial claws she wears are harming her. Her body has bloody scars in a close-up to emphasize the patriarchal violence that may even be perpetrated by oneself due to internalized self-immolation, which is further signified in scenes with fire. Yet, similar to the fire later engulfing the frames and arrows slung at the members, the claws are turned against the canvas and frame itself (Figure 4). Rather than the claws potentially hurting her own body, the image conveys the narrative that, on the left, Soojin has claimed herself as queen by forming a crown above her head with her golden clawed fingers. On the right, the new status quo is one where Soojin as queen ravages the black canvas, which may symbolize any disparaging tainted perspective that the frame may force on her. Her bare dress and lack of adornment showcase a sense of unguarded vulnerability. This leans into accepted norms of femininity as weakness, but this display of injury under prejudice is framed as one of advocating for empowerment: “the ambivalent images of how painful she feels but also how dignified she is despite her pitiful situation” (Chang 79). The vulnerable weakness inspires indignation: a justified desire to fight back against the patriarchal mold and take control of her own narrative like a lion asserting itself.
With other animal symbolism, in CLC’s “ME,” member Elkie’s solo sequences feature decorative black and white buck heads (Figure 5). Aside from alluding to Elkie’s stage name, the buck heads traditionally represent authoritative masculinity. In a brightly lit corridor with the buck heads flanking Elkie on both sides, Elkie curiously caresses some of the white buck heads hanging on the wall, while leaning and looking alongside the black ones on the opposite side. Signifying the patriarchal gaze, the buck heads all look at Elkie who cannot help but be in the center due to the narrow hallway. Coinciding with the lyrics of “The innocence inside the glamorous, the purity inside the arrogance,” this image conveys the precarious duality of the feminine ideal – a woman needs to be both pure and sensual, as well as naïve and sophisticated. In a later sequence, the buck heads have been shattered, but Elkie salvages and holds a white...
buck head in a medium angle shot while announcing that “my gaze like a dazzling light.” This direct address is a demand for her gaze to be taken as seriously as the ornamental male gaze. Her holding the white buck head at the center of the frame seems to be reconciling the notion that the privileged gaze is the one that views her in the “white” light mold, a woman of pure Confucian virtue. However, after this placation to the patriarchal gaze, the white buck head is shown shattering framed glass box that originally had the *Venus de Milo* visage, a nod to the ideal feminine form. The glass cage, which earlier in the video held member Seongyeon who sat in demure fashion as “the patriarchal society has disciplined female bodies to be passive and restricted objects” (Oh, “The Politics of the Dancing Body” 57), had also been smeared with black paint by member Yubin’s fingers in a previous frontal shot before being completely covered. Conforming with the expectations of girl group music videos, their faces and bodies may have been deified, and to a certain extent sexualized, reminiscent of Roland Barthes’ assessment in “Garbo’s Face,” but the suggestion of interiority is the emphasis in this video. All the gazes established in the video are obscured and destroyed by other gaze signifiers. CLC’s “ME” plays around with the gaze before proclaiming that ultimately it does not matter to their own self-worth. Ultimately, the narrative advocates for the active dismantling of the male gaze as it represents the restrictive societal conventions placed upon female bodies and minds. To assert oneself and claim a self-possessed identity requires deconstruction and destruction.
Figure 5 In "ME," member Elkie interacts with ornamental buck heads.
THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Conforming to K-beauty standards is a nonnegotiable prerequisite for success and consideration in KPOP, so the members of CLC and (G)I-DLE are no exception. Their music videos confront this paradigm by deconstructing and destroying signifiers of the feminine ideal. As mainstream girl group idols, they portray a palatable but subversive notion of female personhood that aligns with Laura Mulvey’s idea of construction and spectatorship that is defined by the female subject through the (literal) shattering of a potential male gaze and interrogating the viewer’s own expectations of their identity as women. There is an acknowledgement that a lot of their power comes from them being marked as spectacle, but their assertion is that they will not be passive, like Mulvey suggests: “the fetishism and voyeurism through which women are represented in narrative cinema often works to halt the narrative flow of the film: women are represented as passive spectacle” (Rose 161). There is also this suggestion that their feminine mystique, “typical of how the women in the film noir genre are presented: as threatening but ultimately guilty and weak” (Rose 159), is empowering rather than demoralizing or disparaging, as seen in the clawed Soojin motif in the “LION” video. Her sitting beside the gold frame set on the ground places her above and out of being pure spectacle, suggesting that she wants to be conceived and considered outside of the established narrative. The darkness and starkness of the video aesthetic convey a discomforting and disquieting tone surrounding this active subversion of the gaze; while invigorating and empowering, this act is dangerous, potentially causing harm (physical or psychological) to both the subject and the spectator.

Alternatively, CLC’s “ME” establishes a sense of empowerment through self-actualized beauty rather than meeting the demands of an externally motivated gaze. The title “ME (美)”
includes the Chinese character or Hanja for beauty, which is pronounced as “mi” in Korean to further the pun of beauty as defined by “me” or oneself. The song lyrics acknowledge that this perspective of oneself as beautiful is newly discovered or previously denied: “It’s not obvious baby / It’s new to me / Ordinary, no, no, I’m special / Because something feels different (That’s why),” “Slowly slowly, fall for me (To the beauty I’ve never seen),” and “Beauty, admit the beautiful me.” The video’s proclamation of beauty as self-worth is both earnest and self-confident. An internal realization that one’s beauty is unique and self-determined rather than attained through comparison and existing molds is emphasized not only in the lyrics but also throughout the video. As previously mentioned, Seungyeon in CLC’s “ME” is first seen encased in a glass framed box with the image of Venus de Milo, a popular artwork depicting deified feminine beauty. Overlaying the image of Venus on Seungyeon compels the audience to equate the two, suggesting that Seungyeon does or must fulfill that standard of beauty. With the shattering of the case and Seungyeon existing without the pedestal in frame, beauty is redefined as self-possession rather than a viewer-subject relationship.

Similar images of the members emphasizing their “viewability” for a privileged audience are also displayed in (G)I-DLE’s “LION.” In Figure 6, Yuqi and Miyeon are depicted as portraiture with halos and gilded round frames: “the suggestion of reciprocity between the viewer and the person depicted in the image had a devotional purpose” (Kress 117). Particularly with “LION,” subjects’ faces are seen framed by literal golden frames and a separate aspect ratio of 4:3 with vertical gold bars to highlight shots of idealized or imaginary feminine vulnerability and ferality: “Portraits are not meant to represent a specific moment in time; they are meant to represent the essence of the person, or, perhaps, of a person at a certain stage of his or her life, or a person in a certain role. Yet, although the picture is analytical, its purpose is more interpersonal
and emotive than representational. The interactional system of the gaze dominates” (Kress and Leeuwen 84). Especially considering the plentitude of Biblical, Grecian, Pre-Raphaelite, and Neoclassical imagery, the subjects are framing themselves, often quite literally with frames, as works of art or constructions of myth that are destroying their boundaries and coming alive to claim their right to exist as agents, rather than submissive objects. By playing with the meaning behind the sign of “frame,” (G)I-DLE is calling attention to the artifice and limitations of this kind of interaction between subject and spectator. The frame encourages the spectator to maintain a distance that simultaneously enhances the unknowability and oversimplification of the subject. The video showcases the fierce and hostile anguish caused by this framing, making their plight sympathetic and justified. Rather than simply being beautiful subjects for the visual pleasure of the audience, they are individuals with emotions and motives expressing their desire to break free from the confines of established societal norms. In a way, the term “girl crush” can be recontextualized as a declaration for female actors to demolish gender expectations that threaten to make them feel diminutive. This rings true considering that this song and the music video became a viral sensation in not only South Korea but international markets after being featured on the reality competition show Queendom as (G)I-DLE’s song performance in the season finale (Benjamin). The public has been particularly keen on similar themes of female empowerment in recent years, as the demand for social advocacy and authentic artist expression within KPOP has grown (Chang 69).
Figure 6 Haloes and gilded frames for Miyeon (TOP) and Yuqi (Bottom)

Destroy the boring rhythm and devote a lion's dance

Trapped in the burning hot rhythm and devote a lion's dance
MYTH OF AN IDOL

Historically, the foundation of the KPOP girl group model is built upon compliance. Girl groups are heavily manufactured, and their images are precisely manicured: “the idols have strategically been incepted, crafted, and modified to cater to the fleeting tastes of targeted audiences domestically or internationally” (G. Kim, “From Hybridity of Cultural Production” 127). Especially salient is the issue of “beauty,” which must simultaneously appeal to broad international audiences and appease conservative local tastes: “the glocalization of beauty, for young Korean women, means having to negotiate prescriptive regimes of beauty from global and local consumer cultures, and having to navigate and reconcile these contradictory forces.” Korean beauty standards effectively “fixes, imposes, and narrows possibilities for the gendered performance of beauty” (Seo). The industry prioritizes gender conformity amongst its performers. Ultimately, the extensive training period members undergo to become a part of these groups forces “female idols to have internalized and reinforced a subservient self-image that is contingent upon the patriarchal desire of imagined femininity” (G. Kim “K-Pop Idol Girl Groups” 200). Rather than this being strictly a critical concern, producers and fans alike are highly aware of this problematic narrative and have become more outspoken about reforming the machine and text of KPOP.

Compounding the damage to personhood and validation within the KPOP industry is the evident lack of creative control. To be seen as more than just corporeal spectacle or symbolic bodies, the audience must see the members as “artists” rather than just “idols.” Particularly for female performers, they must either be “singer-songwriters that ‘control the production of their own music,’ or they cultivate a ‘star image’ based on ‘artistic eccentricity’” to have any level of authority or authenticity as a music artist (Unger 28). Often, KPOP girl groups rely on their
consistent concept to achieve legitimacy, but that image is carefully crafted by their production company rather than themselves. Under the sheltered umbrella of Cube Entertainment, CLC and (G)I-DLE are among a few girl groups who have a hand in producing the work they perform, as they assert themselves in the songwriting and visual language of their music videos. CLC’s rapper Yeeun contributed to the lyrics of “ME,” but more prominent is (G)I-DLE Soyeon’s clout as a producer for her girl group. Their ability to compose their own lyrics and be active participants rather than passive vessels “break fundamental doubts as to whether female groups can have their own voice with which to convey their [own] story” (Chang 81).

For instance, Soyeon’s rap section in (G)I-DLE’s “LION” makes a proclamation of agency and power by asserting oneself as “a queen like a lion” and dismantling other’s perception of social acceptability: “I'll bite off your useless courtesy / We tear down your suffocating prejudice / Who would dare to stop me / Careful with my sharp claws / I create a new path no one has attempted before / All those condescending people will click their tongues / But the applause I receive after breaking that prejudice is thrilling / I've had a taste, now I can't deny it.” Rather than being demure and pliant or inviting and sensual, the tone is aggressive and
confrontational in its individuality through its self-assertive use of “I,” while alluding to female solidarity with its insertion of “we” in its collective denouncement of bigotry. Previously established visuals of Soyeon behind cage bars, Soojin with wounding claw marks, and the gilded frames set aflame collide in quick cuts to match the rapid-fire staccato pace of the rap to assert the sense of empowerment unlocked by flouting the restraints of societal expectations. Self-actualization comes from impassioned disregard for the norms of femininity, signified by the museum mise-en-scene of “elegant spectacle” (Oh, “The Politics of the Dancing Body” 64). The museum and all its trappings are set ablaze, and the members stand dominant surveying the remnants. When the rap ends on “I’m a queen,” the image quality of crowned Minnie is fuzzy and her body is shrouded in shadow, except for her eyes. The body ideal vanishes, as her gaze is emphasized by the lighting. Like Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, her gaze is ambiguous, her body is present but not on display, and the viewer is left uncertain of its positioning to the subject. According to Chang, this image can also symbolize “one’s awakening from the prejudices of the world and grief and anger due to society’s unfair treatment” (77), and her eye becomes accusatory and confrontational as the viewer is challenged for their complacent spectatorial role.

Both music videos are illuminated to magnify the myth of feminine beauty. The lighting gradually advances from bright light to darkness. The light represents the idealized superficiality of outer beauty and delicate perfection, or femininity as spectacle. Darkness and shadow shrouds truth but also acknowledges the unknowable interiority of the female subject – mysterious but knowable only through consent of the subject through their gaze and lyrics rather than voyeuristic camera angles. Similar to conclusion of “LION,” the video “ME” ends with not only individual shots of members under pronounced shadows but also the final group scenes in
dramatically dim lighting so that the group is mostly shrouded in darkness in the parting shots (Figure 8). While the members are framing their face in a “vogue” style to suggest the performativity of beauty standards, the obfuscation of their faces heightens the notion that the “beautiful ME” they are championing is internal and subjective and cannot be easily accessed by prying eyes under external objective ideals. Rather than surrendering to sympathies for the struggle, the acknowledgement of the oppressive hierarchy and repressive feminine ideals justifies the need to fight back and challenge the status quo and allows audiences to embrace this image of self-possession as female empowerment. It may still be a pretty package, but the message is full of charge and criticism.

Figure 8 The concluding shot of CLC’s “ME” features the members posing with dramatic flair but their faces, especially their eyes, are obscured.

CONCLUSION

Although these music videos are undoubtedly limited in their ability to completely upend the rigid myth of the Korean feminine ideal, these groups have “opened up alternative ways of performing sexuality, spectatorship, and identification of gender relations via spectatorship” (Oh, “Cinderella in Reverse” 137). The music video is a “cultural text” that encapsulates “how gender
norms activate and realize changes in gender identity” (Chang 80). Both CLC’s “ME” and (G)I-DLE’s “LION” offer a cohesive and complementary narrative about the formation of a feminine subjectivity acknowledging but ultimately dismantling traditional Confucian hegemony to assert a modern transnational ideology of self-determination. The groups’ image of self-assurance has resonated with local Korean but especially international fans, highlighting the audience desire for girl groups that showcase individualistic charm and self-confidence. Although members from both groups have left due to a lack of support from their production company, the legacy and myth constructed through the music videos remains as a statement that advocates empowerment through reframing, obscuring, and destroying the dominant narrative or context to position the female subjectivity as self-made.
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Preliminary Sources


Project 3

Peer Response to Writing Amongst Student Journalists

This peer review framework was designed specifically for my Journalism class, as it is a project-based learning course that publishes to our school community. The Journalism course is an elective that welcomes students of varied writing levels and backgrounds. When I inherited the program four years ago, I had difficulty establishing a consistent writing ecology due to my own inexperience, the program’s existing lack of structure, minimal returning staffers, and the pandemic mucking with master scheduling. Originally when I created this project, 90 percent of my roster was Journalism I students with little to no prior knowledge or experience (I typically only had a handful of returning Journalism students also with limited structured experience). The publication our Journalism program produces is supposed to be student-led, but I had struggled in the past with providing an environment that encourages students to become invested in not only our publication’s quality but also in their own writing and role as journalists. Therefore, I invested time in refining a mutually beneficial peer review process that enables students to provide meaningful and constructive feedback to one another. Through the implementation of this project in my Journalism classroom, it has helped build a community of journalists who strive to support and challenge one another to develop as writers. Students have been able to trust and rely upon one another for actionable and appropriate feedback. In this paper, I will discuss my pedagogical motivations, my experiments with Peter Elbow’s peer response group, and the peer review procedure I designed for my Journalism program based on my investigations and research.

Rather than exclusively writing for the instructor or a vague abstract audience, my Journalism students are writing for an audience that consists of real people in our local community. Journalism is often conceived as strictly transactional writing with its formal intent
of conveying information; however, I believe writing motivation and progress most organically stems from expressive writing, which most engaging investigative journalism projects is nowadays since the writer’s voice becomes an integral part of the piece and its ability to capture a reader’s attention. Therefore, my students "should learn how his words were actually experienced" by their readers (Elbow 262). By realizing the impact of their writing on actual readers, students become more personally invested in their writing and the rhetorical situation. Aside from increasing writing motivation, writing growth is facilitated by an environment conducive to feedback and critique. This project hopes to create a space for students collaborate in “sustained dialogue and exchanges among trusted peers,” including “discussions of the participants’ impressions of specific comments, especially their attempts to understanding the [responder’s] underlying purpose or rationale for the comment and its placement…sharing such reflections not only exposes us to different response strategies (perhaps ones we have never used or seen used), but also helps us to formulate theoretical and practical justifications for the decisions we make” (Anson 375). Rather than just evaluating the writer’s original work, scrutiny of the responsive feedback must also be included to enhance the efficacy of the whole writing workshop experience. Otherwise, the group becomes unproductive and meaningless with useless or hollow responses.

Adopting Peter Elbow’s “teacherless writing class” framework, I had my Journalism students divide into 4-person groups to share their first piece of writing for my class. Since the school year just started, my students conducted interviews with a classmate with the intent of writing a short biography, or personality profile, about their classmate based on information gleamed from the interview process. I provided the initial questions to ease them into the exercise. Aside from allowing students to familiarize themselves with one another, this is their
first exposure with interviewing, which is a vital component of the journalistic process. The interview was informal and low-stakes to reduce the affective barrier of Journalism I students. After writing a 300-400 word biography, students met in their small writing groups. Following Elbow’s workshop suggestion, each student writer read their piece out loud, allowed 2 minutes of quiet digestion of the piece, and took notes of the group’s reactions. I provided basic guidelines for their workshop, including how to provide reactions: “Listeners take turns sharing their feelings and reactions toward the bio, no judgments or suggestions. (1) Identify main points or feelings generated by the bio, (2) Single sentence to summarize the bio, (3) Select 1 word from the bio to sum it up, (4) Come up with 1 word NOT from the bio to sum it up” (adapted from Elbow 267). Although initially awkward and stilted, students gradually realized and appreciated the freedom afforded in the reactions. Based on their post-workshop reflections, students were able to become more comfortable with one another and situate themselves as a writing group. One student remarked, “I like this work[shop] structure because it is a mix of collaboration and getting to know how other people write.” Many students shared this sentiment that the workshop was helpful in establishing a writing ecology of open sharing as writers.

Some students did voice that the workshop was too “loose” in structure or that they did not receive much substantive feedback to “know what to improve about [their] writing.” Although I believe this initial writing workshop was successful in my goal of assimilating students into a writing group, their reservations toward the efficacy of this model in receiving concrete suggestions for improvement is warranted. Starting the year with this workshop model allows students to become comfortable with one another as writers and readers, establishing the threshold concept that their writing “requires readers.” As student journalists, they must understand that their writing will be read, potentially by many different diverse readers who do
not share their exact values or style. To enact the whole threshold concept inspired by the research on first-year writing students about the writing process as a cognitive activity though, one that is “individualized, require[s] readers, and require[s] revision” (Phillips et al. 69), students require more scaffolding and structured support.

Inspired by the WEx Guide to Peer Review’s methods and AP English Language and Composition training materials, I assert that student writers must understand the rhetorical situation to provide appropriate feedback with a clear line of reasoning. The Describe-Assess-Suggest method is particularly effective in positioning the reader to think, not just as a reader, but as a writer as well. Similar to the peer review feature in Canvas used in many courses, I initially utilized the Peermark assignment feature on Turnitin.com to facilitate the process. After students submit their initial drafts by deadline, students are assigned two different drafts for peer review. Rather than randomize the peer review assignments, the parameters were adjusted to ensure that each piece is seen by readers of varying writing abilities. As the year progressed and editor responsibilities were assigned, at least one of the reviews were required to be from either the Section Editor or Associate Editor. Through Peermark, students can not only provide in-text comments on the document, but they are also prompted to construct free responses that Describe the journalistic content of the draft, Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the writing, and Suggest and justify ways to improve the story. I created handouts, reproduced below, for the four major story types done in our Journalism class (news/feature story, personality profile, opinion-editorial, and review) with the questions that would be asked through the Peermark platform. In case of technology issues, it is important to have analog alternatives, so that students have the option to complete the peer review by hand.
Starting with Peermark, students familiarized themselves with the Describe-Assess-Suggest form through repeated exposure and practice. For their stories from the first two months of the course, students would complete peer reviews of two drafts per story assignment. The procedure would take them most of the 50-minute period, as they were compelled to thoroughly review their peers’ drafts and offer concrete feedback through the forms. The students completed this formal process of peer review at least seven times since the start of the year. By that point, students had very much internalized the procedure, and the editors consulted with me that they did not need the extensive scaffolding form anymore. To expedite the drafting and revision process, they instead used the Describe-Assess-Suggest model for peer conferences and in-document comments. Upon moving away from the Peermark form, students engaged in more conversations about their writing and more revisions were being made before finalizing for publication. An issue during the Peermark period of review was that sometimes students would not follow through on the revisions suggested by the form because they would not revisit their writing with the reviewer to ensure that appropriate improvements were made. Adjusting the peer review model by incorporating more conferences and peer-to-peer workshopping, students became more comfortable with sharing, discussing, and editing their work overall. Although students became less reliant on the original form, it served as a valuable tool to support my student journalists in achieving a writer-reviewer mentality. Figure 1 illustrates a student sample from my class. The reviewer’s positive tone and constructive suggestions are the type of language that students gradually adopted into their casual verbal interactions with one another, building that community of writers envisioned earlier. Thorough reflection throughout each step of the writing workshop is integral for the entire procedure to sustain the potential momentum for growth and learning: “When students begin to see writing processes as multistaged, it can
become easier for them to see how reader feedback can inform those stages and subsequent revisions” (Phillips et al. 70).

Figure 5 Student sample of a completed peer review form for a personality profile draft. Student names of the writer and reviewer have been redacted.
Peer Reviewer: ____________________ Writer: ____________________________________________

Story Idea: ________________________________________________________________

Read the entirety of the story before answering the questions below. Be sure to provide detailed, constructive, and generous feedback that seeks to improve the writing for the sake of our *Bulldog Times* readers.

**DESCRIBE**

1. What is the angle of the story? (What is the theme or point of the story?)

2. What is the essential information (5Ws & How) for this story? Is it presented at the beginning of the story (lead)?

3. Who are the individuals that are quoted? Include first and last name, grade level, and/or position in organization. (There should be at least 3!) Do they represent a diversity of voices?

4. Which quotes are colorful and meaningful? Cite the noteworthy quotes and describe what kind of information, personality, or voice is showcased. (Avoid clichés/conveying basic information)

5. What information seems like it is from an outside source? Are all the quotes and facts/statistics clearly attributed and cited?

6. Describe the writer’s tone of voice (what is the writer’s attitude toward his/her subject?).

7. How does the writer make you feel about the topic?

**ASSESS**

8. What are the strengths of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

9. What are the weaknesses of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

**SUGGEST**

10. Offer at least TWO suggestions for the writer. Explain WHY you’re making each suggestion and/or HOW the change will affect the story.
DESCRIBE

1. Is the lead clever and engaging? Write an alternative lead based on what you read in the story.

2. What is the angle of the story? (What is the theme or point of the story aside from the fact that the subject is whatever role or title they have?)

3. What interesting aspects of the subject’s life and personality are revealed through the story?

4. Does the writer SHOW rather than tell? Do they include precise imagery and storytelling in their article? What opportunities are there for the writer to include more descriptive storytelling moments?

5. How many direct quotes are included in the story? Are the quotes interesting and meaningful or just conveying cliches/basic information? Do they include sources other than the subject to enhance their profile (at least 2 other relevant people)?

ASSESS

6. What are the strengths of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

7. What are the weaknesses of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

SUGGEST

8. Offer at least TWO suggestions for the writer. Explain WHY you’re making each suggestion and/or HOW the change will affect the story based on the rubric.
Peer Reviewer: ____________________ Writer: __________________________________________

OpEd Subject: ______________________________________________________

DESCRIBE

1. What is the main opinion or stance of the writer as presented in the OpEd?

2. How does the writer introduce their topic? How does the writer hook readers into their argument? What background context has the writer provided to inform readers?

3. What types of facts and evidence does the writer use to support their claims and reasons for their stance?

4. What outside sources does the writer cite? Are all the quotes, facts/statistics, expert opinions, testimonies, etc. clearly attributed and cited?

5. What counterclaims or possible oppositions does the writer address? How does the writer rebut them?

6. What is the “call to action” of the OpEd (what does the writer want readers to do after reading their argument?)?

ASSESS

7. What are the strengths of the story? In particular, do you think their opinion is well-supported and convincing? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

8. What are the weaknesses of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

SUGGEST

9. Offer at least TWO suggestions for the writer. Explain WHY you're making each suggestion and/or HOW the change will affect the OpEd.
Peer Reviewer: _____________________ Writer: ________________________________
Subject of Review: _______________________________

DESCRIBE

1. What is the essential information (who, what, when, where) for this story? Is it presented at the beginning of the review (lead)? What descriptions has the writer given about their subject (tones, genre, etc.)?

2. Which person(s) involved in the creation of the subject are mentioned? Are they presented at the beginning? Are there any people/organizations that were not mentioned in the review that should be included?

3. What is the stance that the writer has presented about their subject? Is it clear-cut and easy to identify throughout the review?

4. What claims do the writer make defending their stance? Are these claims reasonable and convincing?

5. Does the writer utilize descriptive/colorful language throughout the review? What opportunities are there for the writer to include more engaging language?

6. How does the writer make you feel about the subject they are reviewing?

ASSESS

7. What are the strengths of the review? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

8. What are the weaknesses of the review? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

SUGGEST

9. Offer at least TWO suggestions for the writer. Explain WHY you’re making each suggestion and/or HOW the change will affect the review.
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Project 4

“Bulldog Times Journalism Staff Manual”
### Table of Contents

- Mission & Values 1
- Website Publication Preview 2
- Instagram Preview 3
- Journalism I-III Course Expectations 4-6
- Production Cycle Responsibilities 7
- Individual Staff Evaluations 8
  - Code of Ethics 9
  - Staff Contract 10
- Chain of Command 11
- Job Descriptions 12-14
- How to be an Effective Editor 15-16

#### Publication Handbook
- Description of Production Cycle 1
- Determining Newsworthiness 2
- Story Prep Form Preview 2-3
- Interviewing Tips 4
- LQTQ News Story Structure 5
- Story Structure - Inverted Pyramid 6
- Story Structure - Wineglass 7
  - Writing Leads 8
  - Leads to Avoid 9
  - Dates & Times 10
- Numbers, Names, Acronyms, Titles 11
  - References/Identifiers 12
  - Attributions 13
  - Quotations 14
  - Punctuation 15
- Other Writing Style Tips 16-21
- Writing Headlines & Selecting Pull Quotes 22
- Tips for Captions 23
- Peer Review Form Preview 24
- Posting on the Website 25-26
- Glossary 27
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Ayala High School
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Chino Hills, CA 91709

Classroom B103
(909) 627-3584 ext. 2103
Welcome to the staff of Ayala High School's student-run news organization! The Bulldog Times is the online student-run publication of Chino Hill's Ruben S. Ayala High School. Providing an outlet for student voices and informing the community about student life, we operate a news website and Instagram account.

As a team of student journalists, you provide the vision and voice of the Bulldog Times. As a publishing organization, we are committed to publishing weekly on the news, campus and community activities, and student culture. We offer an elective Journalism course where most of our planning and production occur, as well as an extracurricular club for those who cannot fit the class into their schedule but would still like to regularly contribute.

Content decisions are made by the editorial staff with limited interference and guidance of the advisor, who is merely there to assist in your endeavors. You are ultimately in charge of creating and sustaining the publication with your creativity and insight.

We pride ourselves in challenging our limits and breaking out of our comfort zones to explore new opportunities, as we believe growth comes from traversing the unfamiliar and learning from struggle. New project and feature ideas are always welcome, as we are trying to build and foster a thriving professional community of student writers, artists, producers, editors, and overall effective communicators.

During your time with the Bulldog Times team, you will develop skills in...

• Writing
• Editing
• Interviewing
• Public Speaking
• Photography
• Research
• News/Media Literacy
• Web & Graphic Design
• Audiovisual Production
• Teamwork & Collaboration
• Project Management
• Professional Communication

We look forward to having you a part of our BDT team!
Website Publication

Stories fall under the categories of News, Features, Arts & Entertainment, Sports, and “Bulldogs of Ayala.” New categories are in the works.

Bulldog Times
Student News Site of Ruben S. Ayala High School

Recent Stories

DRX wins the League of Legends 2022 World Championship
Ethan Huang, Staff Writer • November 20, 2022

[Review] ‘One Piece Film: Red’ is a love letter to ‘One Piece’ fans
Anni Kim and Joshua Wong • November 17, 2022

[Op-Ed] Do Americans still have grit?
Kaitlyn Lu • November 11, 2022

News

Daylight Savings: One hour can change your life
Tina Lizama • November 10, 2022

Spring forward and fall back. These are the words that are heard in California, among other states that still enforce daylight savings, for turning our clocks ahead an hour or back an hour. This occurs every year on the 2nd Sunday of March and the first...

Features

Analyzing the Impact of Instability Around the World
Brahma Sax, Staff Reporter

Breaking News: “Disturbing text message” threatens safety of students and staff, fall spirit rally postponed
Isabel Sim, Features Editor

A seasonal place for seasonal bonding
Anni Kim

Rescheduled Club Rush dates encourage students to get involved at Ayala
Kaitlyn Lu

Instagram

ayalabulldogtimes
Ayala Bulldog Times
920 followers • 264 posts

Which holiday are you celebrating today?

This poll has ended.

National Holiday
National Chocolate Day (43% - 6 votes)
National Bredstick Day (29% - 4 votes)
Instagram

Content includes marketing outreach and solicitation, publicity for website stories, cross-promotion of other Instagram account content, and Instagram exclusive original content (short form stories) in the form of posts, reels, guides, and stories.
Journalism I-III Class Expectations

Welcome to the staff of The Bulldog Times! As a student in this class, you are the one in complete control of your grade. Your grade will reflect the effort that you put into this class. Student grades are based on a total point system. Assignments include but are not limited to writing articles, team/staff projects, in-class assignments, working independently, and group work. All students are required to keep an updated portfolio for all work done in this class. Students are required to write approximately three publishable stories and other contributions for each publishing cycle. Unfortunately, not all articles are published due to limited space, timeliness, appropriateness, etc.

Journalism is a 4th period class that requires students to work together as a team to contribute current and relevant content to the Bulldog Times. There may be times when students will stay after school to meet required deadlines, attend events for coverage, or work on publication-related projects. Some students may be asked to work on weekends or during a school break. Students will be expected to present themselves in a professional manner when representing the Bulldog Times and Ayala High School.

Not turning in work, not turning in a portfolio every grading period, performing poorly on assignments or in class will result in a loss of points. Students will be evaluated on their personal level of involvement, responsibility, and growth as well.

40% Assignments
40% Publication Contributions
20% Staff Duties

Students’ grades are transferred to letter grades at the end of each grading period (97-100%=A+, 93-96%=A, 90-92%=A-; 87-89%=B+, 83-86%=B, 80-82%=B-; 77-79%=C+, 73-76%=C, 70-72%=C-; 67-69%=D+, 63-66%=D, 60-62%=D-; 0-59%=F). Semester grades are determined by the total amount of points earned throughout the semester.

Assignments missed due to an excused absence may be made up without a loss of points. However, students will only have one day for each day missed in which to make up missed work for full credit. Long-term assignments with prearranged deadlines (i.e., stories, projects, etc.) must be turned in on or before the due date.

If GoogleClasssroom fails you, you may also email your assignment to me as an attachment. My email address is eileen_Tse@chino.k12.ca.us. Plan ahead and be responsible.
Objectives
This is a class for the self-motivated student interested in the subject area of Journalism. This class is not a study hall or an “easy A” class. Journalism is a serious, rigorous, stressful, often frustrating, but enjoyable and rewarding class. To achieve excellence, you will require a good work ethic and an investment of time in and out of class.

Editors
Editors have a tremendous responsibility:
- Accountable for the work and actions of yourself and your staff
- The content, presentation, accuracy, and deadlines of your section
- Consistent attendance and transparent communication
- Being a good example for your staff at all times
- Attend all editorial staff meetings (usually during lunch)

Staff Members
Some of your responsibilities include:
- Obtain accurate and correct facts for your story
- Present your story in an interesting manner (angle)
- Complete and turn in a minimum of three stories and other contributions per cycle
- Provide picture(s) for each of your articles, if applicable
- Respect your Editor and fellow staff members
- Keep and maintain a portfolio in the classroom
- Meet your deadlines

Work
Editors and staff will be expected to complete all work assigned to them. Everyone will be expected to meet all deadlines; exceptions are very rare. You are expected to complete your own original research and work, as well as represent your efforts and communications with honesty and integrity.

You will be required to complete a digital portfolio for the class. This portfolio will consist of any and all work that you have produced for the class including any and all published stories, final copies of stories not published, outlines, drafts, interview transcripts, works cited, any artwork or photos. These digital portfolios will be collected, reviewed, and graded on a regular basis.

Each student will also be required to bring their personal electronic device (Chromebook) so they may save their work and submit their contributions for publication. The student will use Google Classroom/GoogleDrive to submit their assignments.
Publicity
As a member of the Bulldog Times staff, it is your responsibility to reach the Ayala High School community and make sure our publication gets read. This means you need to help with publicizing the Bulldog Times. Be positive, courteous, and gracious with all comments about all content.

Attendance/Participation
This class requires that all students be in class and actively involved in their work. Frequent tardies and/or absences will limit your success and may result in your removal from the class. We are a team and, as a team, we must work together.

Professional Conduct
This class operates as a business. You must consider yourself as a professional inside and outside of this classroom. You represent the eyes and ears of Ayala High School. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. All information is important and confidential until publication. Be respectful with all equipment and materials in this class.

Technology
Any technology use (laptops, cell phones, video game consoles, etc.) during class time is for educational and professional purposes pertaining to the Bulldog Times and Journalism class ONLY. Any unprohibited use of technology will result in confiscation and/or your permission revoked for the rest of the class.
Every 3 weeks (cycle), your goal will be to complete publication assignments totaling 80 points within your assigned section department. You will be working collaboratively under the direction of the section editor to ensure timely comprehensive coverage and consistently high-quality work for your section.

As an individual, you must complete at least THREE 400-800 word stories (at least 2 must be for your assigned department, 1 may be for another department). Each story is worth 20 points. For the Arts & Entertainment, you will also do reviews (10 pts). For sports, you will also do sports recaps (5 pts). For the social media department, you will complete a combination of Instagram stories (1 pt), posts (2 pts), reels (3 pts) and videos (5 pts) that total 60 pts minimum.

To fulfill the rest of the points, you can write more stories OR complete “other” assignments: contribute live event photography coverage (at least 10 publishable photos), create a themed photo essay with original content, draw color illustrations or artwork, or some other project based on approval. You may do it for your own story assignment, someone else's story, or as a standalone project. Each of “other” projects are worth 10 points each.

For each cycle, you will be assigned to a new department team, so you'll have the opportunity to try and focus on each section. This goes into the “publication contributions” category, which will be worth 40% of your grade.

**Publication Contributions**

40% of your Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Story Packages</strong> (400-800 words)</th>
<th><strong>Department Specific Contributions</strong></th>
<th><strong>“Other” Options 10 pts each</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 pts each</td>
<td>• Arts &amp; Entertainment Reviews (10 pts)</td>
<td>• Color Illustrations, Artwork, or Comics (accompanying story or standalone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Story Prep/Outlines</td>
<td>• Sports Recaps (5 pts)</td>
<td>• Opinion Pieces</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Drafts</td>
<td>• Instagram Stories (1 pt)</td>
<td>• Social Media Posts or Reels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interview Transcripts</td>
<td>• Instagram Posts w/ at least 2 slides, captions, tags, etc. (2 pts)</td>
<td>• Live Event Photo Coverage (10 publishable photos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Peer Reviewed by 2 other team members</td>
<td>• Social Media Reels (3 pts)</td>
<td>• Themed Photo Essay (at least 5 original photos with descriptive captions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reviewed by Section Editor</td>
<td>• Social Media Videos w/ Interviews (5 pts)</td>
<td>• Have other ideas to contribute? Consult editors &amp; adviser for approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Revisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Promotion &amp; 200 Views</td>
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Individual Staff Evaluations

Aside from your publication contributions for the cycle, you will also be evaluated and graded on your cooperation and the completion of department project duties as both a group and an individual staff member. Your level of involvement, responsibility, and growth as a Bulldog Times team member will be evaluated through personal portfolio logs, advisor observations, and peer assessments. This goes into the “Staff Duties” category, which will be worth 20% of your grade.

Involvement
(5) Actively seeks to improve the publication by developing and executing new and relevant ideas.
(4) Volunteers for assignments and/or uses resources to fulfill duties and complete assignments.
(3) Accepts assignments when they are made and follows instructions adequately in carrying them out.
(2) Consistently needs directions and is casual about carrying them out.
(1) Shows no interest and/or ability to contribute to the quality of our publication.

Responsibility
(5) Actively takes responsibility for the quality of the publication and uses class time to be helpful and productive by carrying out individual responsibilities, volunteering to help others, and/or performing extra duties.
(4) Consistently dependable in carrying out his/her duties. Uses class time for Journalism work only. Helps others when asked.
(3) Usually carries out duties. May need to be reminded. Mostly utilizes class time for Journalism work.
(2) Careless about completing duties. Seems uninterested in cooperating with others to create a quality publication. Consistently working on non-Journalism things.
(1) Thoroughly untrustworthy, unproductive, and/or uncooperative most or all of the time.

Growth
(5) Exhibits eagerness to explore new skills and applies new learning to improve in all aspects of the publication process.
(4) Learns new skills and concepts and uses these to improve quality of work in all aspects of their journalism work.
(3) Growth is limited to specific skill areas (writing, layout, etc.) or has little impact on work.
(2) Growth is very limited and does not have an apparent effect on work.
(1) Work shows no growth.

Scale

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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Total Score: ___ / 100
Code of Ethics

The Bulldog Times abides by the standards of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Society of Professional Journalists

CODE of ETHICS

PREAMBLE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity.

The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media.

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.
- Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.
- Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.
- Be cautious when making promises, but keep the promises they make.
- Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources.
- Consider sources’ motives before promising anonymity. Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted.
- Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.
- Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public.
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public’s business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.
- Provide access to source material when it is relevant and appropriate.
- Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.
- Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.
- Label advocacy and commentary.
- Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments.
- Never plagiarize. Always attribute.

MINIMIZE HARM

Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- Balance the public’s need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.
- Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent.
- Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.
- Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.
- Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.
- Balance a suspect’s right to a fair trial with the public’s right to know. Consider the implications of identifying criminal suspects before they face legal charges.
- Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of publication. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.

Journalists should:

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money, do not pay for access to news. Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not.
- Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two. Prominently label sponsored content.

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one’s work and explaining one’s decisions to the public.

Journalists should:

- Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage and news content.
- Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.
- Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently. Explain corrections and clarifications faithfully.
- Respect the right of journalists, including within their organizations.
- Abide by the same high standards they expect of others.

The SPJ Code of Ethics is a statement of abiding principles supported by additional explanations and position papers (at spj.org) that address changing journalistic practices. It is not a set of rules, rather a guide that encourages all who engage in journalism to take responsibility for the information they provide, regardless of medium. The code should be read as a whole; individual principles should not be taken out of context. It is not, nor can it be under the First Amendment, legally enforceable.
Staff Contract

To students and parents of students accepted as members of the school publication staff:

- Participation on the school publication staff affords students with more freedom than most other classes. It also requires them to take responsibility and exhibit a high degree of maturity and good judgment.
- As members of a group that produces a concrete product that will be publicized to and read by both students and adults, those named to the staff can expect to be held to accepted journalistic standards and ethical practices.
- As individuals, they are recognized by many as representatives of the Bulldog Times, whether actually on assignment or not.
- To show that you fully understand the responsibilities of staff membership, please have the following contract read and signed by both you and a parent or guardian.

I, _________, as a member of the Bulldog Times staff, agree to abide by the following:

1) I will not take advantage of the freedom given to staff members to leave class to cover assignments and do other work for the publication. I will not use journalistic duties as an excuse for playing around outside of class, leaving the classroom, or disturbing other classes.
2) I will meet deadlines for assignments, revisions, and other publication projects. If I find that it may be difficult or impossible to meet a deadline, I will inform my editor, the editorial board, and advisor at the earliest possible moment to help resolve the situation.
3) I understand that I am expected to devote time to completing assignments and other production work for the publication, just as I expect to do homework for any other class. This means for a class that meets an hour a day, I am willing to devote the equivalent of up to five hours weekly, although this may not be required on a regular basis.
4) I agree to produce at least three stories and other items of publishable material each production cycle equating to at least 80 points. The work produced may not necessarily be published in the issue for which it receives credit. Such work not published cannot again be used for credit if published in a following issue.
5) As a representative of the staff, I agree to abide by the standards of good behavior, avoiding rudeness and disrespect to both students and faculty. I realize that the ability of a student press to cover sensitive issues may be questioned if individual staff members are observed acting in an immature or irresponsible manner.
6) I will also keep and maintain a digital portfolio, which will be collected every grading period. In this portfolio, I will maintain and keep all my publishable materials, as well as all of my assignments.
7) I understand that usage of any electronic devices or equipment must be approved by the advisor.

I understand that failure to abide by the terms of this contract can lead to my dismissal from the staff and a lower grade in the class.

Signed,

Student _________________________________ Date ________________

Parent/Guardian ____________________________

~10~
Chain of Command

Managing Editor(s)
Club President

Section Editors
News, Features, Arts & Entertainment, Sports, Social Media

Writers

Photo & Art Editor

Artists
Designers
Photographers
Videographers

Advisor
Job Descriptions

Managing Editor
• Serves as spokesperson for the staff, sets its tone, and represents the publication in dealings with administration and community.
• Conducts meetings (editorial board, staff, pitch, critiques, etc.).
• Oversees staff assignments and checks with other editors to resolve issues and verify that work is progressing in a timely and efficient manner.
• Write stories, gives staff guidance, and makes suggestions for improvement.
• Serves as one of the creative leaders who determine the direction the publication takes during their tenure as Managing Editor.
• Oversees all aspects of Bulldog Times, making sure each published piece is done according to ethical standards, publication policy, and good taste.
• Motivates staff to meet deadlines and do quality work.
• Brings staff issues to adviser’s attention.
• Communicates with editors, writers, photographers, and artists about visual needs for each page and assures quality layouts.
• Checks each page for consistency and Bulldog Times style.

Section Editors
• Coordinate stories, infographics, and photography/art.
• Communicate with other section editors about story redundancy and issue unity.
• Collect rough drafts on a deadline (defined by section editors), provides feedback, and returns for revision.
• Make sure deadlines are met.
• Consult with staff writers during story writing, visuals, and layout.
• Proofs pages before publishing.

Social Media Manager
• Coordinates stories, infographics, videos, and photography/art for Instagram account.
• Communicates with other editors about story coverage and promotion on Instagram, as well as other community members to enhance influence.
• Collects drafts on a deadline (defined by section editors), provides feedback, and returns for revision.
• Makes sure deadlines are met.
• Consults with staff writers during story writing, visuals, and layout.
• Helps choose visual aspects and makes sure text is correct.
• Proofs posts and videos before publishing.
Photography & Art Editor
• Consults on photos and art to photographers.
• Makes sure proper identification is obtained for all photos.
• Works closely with editors and seeks suggestions on elements desirable in photo illustrations to accompany stories.
• Works closely with editors to provide artwork needed to enhance pages, including cartoons, sketches, graphics, and choice of clip art.
• May also create computer-based illustrations and infographics.
• Has responsibility for seeing that all types of artwork are complete, acceptable, and ready for deadline, whether done by another staff artist or self—this is especially important if the managing editor needs assistance.

Writers
• Take part in the development of articles and accompanying visual aspects with editors, photographers, and artists.
• Meet criteria and deadlines.
• Communicate with editor throughout writing process.
• Conduct appropriate research and interviews for articles from a true diversity of sources and points of view.
• Develop interesting angles.
• Provide accurate and impartial news coverage.
• Complete in-depth reporting.
• Write in Bulldog Times style and in a manner appropriate for subject matter and in line with ethical principles.
• Have draft conference with section editor and quickly revise drafts as needed to prepare for publication.

Photographers
• Take photos that reflect the concept of the article.
• Take photos that are filled with action/reaction, reflect the diversity of Ayala High School and its community, are well-framed and are taken in a variety of sizes, orientations and perspectives. (Do not stage a photo unless it is appropriate to the article.)
• Take photos in a variety of locations around the school and community.
• Record full names, year, or every subject in every photo. (Double check spelling of names.)
• Be willing to redo photos when necessary.
• Be willing to write stories when necessary.
Artists, Illustrators, and Designers

- Develop ideas and share concepts with those involved.
- Create high quality visual products.
- Complete miscellaneous artistic assignments and write stories as needed.

All Staff

- Participate in pitch meetings and communicate with other staff regularly.
- Write stories and contribute publishable material for the Bulldog Times.
- Provide actionable feedback during the peer review process and assist in copy editing.
- When finished early or waiting on elements, assist others so with meeting their deadlines.
- Assist with promoting readership, audience interaction, and distribution of the completed print edition of the newspaper as needed.
- Understand the legal implications of journalistic efforts. Always complete work with integrity and accuracy.
- Meet all deadlines.

Adviser

- Is not a staff member. The adviser provides guidance to the staff.
- Along with technology support, acquires and maintains computer equipment.
- Grades and evaluates the staff.
- Assists in setting meeting agendas, if needed.
- Backs up editor in deadline and quality disputes.
- Organizes staff manual.
- Rewards excellence and provides positive feedback.
- Reminds staff regarding style rules, deadlines, etc.
- Arranges to participate in contests, field trips, seminars, and workshops.
- Coordinates and approves finance expenses, fundraisers, and operating costs.
- Advises students concerning legal/ethical problems with stories and visuals.
An Effective Editor

The following is a listing of the most necessary attributes for a strong editor.

**Should be a JOURNALIST:**
- A vision of what the publication should or could be, what you would like it to be—more than an imitation of what it has been.
- A nose for news and an eye for interesting, unusual features with an emphasis on what readers need and want to know.
- A concern for the world in which we live, opinions on what is good, and how problems can be resolved.
- Strong reporting skills demonstrated through interviews of depth, balance, and insight—as well as observation and use of a variety of resources.
- Writing skills in news, feature, and opinion stories with command of mechanics, structure, style, depth, balance, insight, and understanding. All writers should gain experience in news, feature, and opinion writing.
- Perception in editing and strengthening other’s work, while maintaining the writer’s integrity and helping them understand how to be better.
- Creativity in writing informative, interesting leads that draw the reader into the story.
- Visual skills demonstrated through the ability to take strong photographs—or at least sensitivity to quality, composition, and visual story in selecting and editing photographs.
- Creativity in creating attractive layouts utilizing print, photos, and graphics which make each page unique within the variables of the format.
- A comfortable working relationship with technology; should be using the word processing function to type and edit copy and the desire to develop a familiarity with graphics editing programs.

**Should be a LEADER:**
- Operates under the principle that the publication is not mine or yours but OURS—because the shared investment ensures that everyone shares in the success and responsibility for the failures as well.
- Can lead others to support and pursue their vision, or a compromise vision, of what the publication should be.
- Can help members of a group reach a consensus in efficiently run staff or editorial board meetings.
- Can lead the staff in day-to-day operations that demonstrate a knowledge of where things stand (the advisor should not have to do all this in a student-run publication).
- Can set standards of excellence and help others reach those standards.
- Does not do everything themselves but can delegate the responsibility and draw others into the process.
An Effective Editor cont.

• Does not simply tell others what to do but helps them understand what needs to be done and works with them to get it done.
• When necessary, is the enforcer to demand that deadlines and standards of excellence are met.
• When necessary, is the friend who smooths over the rough spots, helps others relax, and ensures that the staff has fun doing all the work that has to be done.
• Recognizes others’ contributions and rewards success.
• Offers clear communications with the advisor, telling her what she needs to know to offer effective guidance.
• Offers positive image in representing the publication to individuals and groups outside the staff.

Should be a ROLE MODEL:
• Because high school is a time to explore interests, leadership on the high school publication does not have to be an exclusive commitment, but an editor must make a priority commitment to ensure other activities will not conflict with the responsibilities to Bulldog Times.
• Initiative in advancing ideas and taking the leadership to ensure that goals are realized.
• Willingness to go beyond expectations to do whatever is necessary to publish the best possible publication.
• Time to meet all the responsibilities and available after school to meet deadlines.
• Absolute dependability in meeting deadlines and commitments. An editor cannot demand that others do what they will not do themselves.
• An understand of the limitations on the freedom of the press and a willingness to assume responsibility to make decisions that best serve the readers.
• Ability to work easily with both peers and adults.
• Respect as a journalist and as a person.
• Friend to be trusted.
• An infectious sense of commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication.
Ayala High School
Bulldog Times
Publication Handbook
2022-2023
Description of Production Cycle 1
Determining Newsworthiness 2
Story Prep Form Preview 2-3
Interviewing Tips 4
LQTQ News Story Structure 5
Story Structure - Inverted Pyramid 6
Story Structure - Wineglass 7
  Writing Leads 8
  Leads to Avoid 9
  Dates & Times 10
Numbers, Names, Acronyms, Titles 11
  References/Identifiers 12
  Attributions 13
  Quotations 14
  Punctuation 15
Other Writing Style Tips 16-21
Writing Headlines & Selecting Pull Quotes 22
  Tips for Captions 23
Peer Review Form Preview 24
Posting on the Website 25-26
  Glossary 27
1) Editors create coverage calendar
2) Section Editors assign stories to their section staff and manage other projects and tasks within their department.
3) Staff complete individual and group assignments under the leadership of Section Editor.
4) Section Editors guide peer review, revision, and editing of assignments to prepare for publication.
5) Section Editors post completed work to website or Instagram.
6) Managing Editors review submissions for final publication.

Aside from the date for the end of the production cycle, deadlines are determined within the department and reinforced by the section editors under supervision of the advisor.
Determining Newsworthiness

How do you decide what story ideas are newsworthy? A story idea should hit 3 or more of these news values.

- **Timeliness**
  - How recently did it happen?
  - What do readers need to know now?
  - What new information is available?

- **Proximity**
  - How close to home is it?
  - Is it local, nation, or global news?
  - How does it affect our community?

- **Impact**
  - How does it affect our readers' lives?
  - What are the consequences of this topic of those affected?

- **Conflict**
  - What are the opposing forces?
  - Where is the drama or disagreement?
  - How are the problems resolved?

- **Prominence**
  - Who are the people involved?
  - Which names can readers recognize?

- **Oddity/Rarity/Novelty**
  - How is it unique, interesting, or unusual?

- **Human Interest**
  - What emotions does it invoke?
  - How does it capture a reader's heart?
  - Is it inspiring, shocking, or funny?

- **Currency**
  - How familiar are people with it already? Is it "trending"?
  - Is it something everyone is talking about in other news media or social media?
Story Prep Form

After receiving approval for your story assignment, use the following prep form to plan and develop your story. You will submit the completed form to your section editor for review before proceeding with your work. Digital versions (PDF and GoogleDoc) of this are found on GoogleDrive and physical copies are available in the classroom.

Writer: ______________ Story Topic: ________________

Pre-Angle: Describe the story you expect to write in 1-3 sentences.

Pre-Interview: Sources of Background Information (may include official websites, research studies, or interviews with expert sources.)
List the people, websites, or other sources where you will get your facts.

Sources & Questions: Use open-ended questions only – NO yes or no questions – to get colorful quotes from your sources. Questions must be relevant to your story topic and must cover all aspects of 5 Ws & H. List the names, identification (grade for students, subject taught or title for adults) and relevance (why this person is interviewed for this story). You must have at least THREE sources for all stories!

General Questions for any or all sources:

1) Who: _______ Questions: Include at least 5 unique questions specific to this source.

2) Who:_______ Questions: Include at least 5 unique questions specific to this source.

3) Who: _______ Questions: Include at least 5 unique questions specific to this source.

Graphics: What images should be included? How will you arrange to photos of the subject?

PLANNING: How will you ensure you meet your deadline? List below all the steps you need to do to make sure you have the story done on time – PLAN OUT EXACTLY WHAT and WHEN you will do it.

1. Pre-Interview/ Background research: ____________________
By Day/Date: ______________
2. Access/ Set up interviews:________________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

3. Observation/ Photos:____________________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

4. Conduct Interviews:_____________________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

5. Revise angle/ prewrite:__________________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

6. Write lead and summary:________________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

7. Outline your story/interviews:____________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

8. Write the story/Organize photos with captions: ______
   By Day/Date: _____________________

9. Submit for Peer Reviews (at least 2):_____________________
   By Day/Date: _____________________

10. REWRITE from Review Feedback:_________________
    By Day/Date: _____________________
Interviewing Tips

1. Do some preliminary research on the person to build some background knowledge.
2. Develop at least 10 open-ended questions to prepare for your interview (consult your story prep form to begin). You want questions that will allow your subject to tell stories with elaborate details.
3. Meet them in-person to introduce yourself and your wish for an in-person interview with them at their earliest convenience.
4. Send a professional email to formally schedule an interview with them in their chosen location, approximately 15-30 minutes.
5. Conduct the interview. Ask permission to record, then do an audio recording on your phone or device, have them spell out their name on the record before proceeding with the conversation. Listen attentively, engage in conversation (not interrogation or simple Q&A), and take notes.
6. Transcribe the interview. Upload your audio recording to Otter.ai or Microsoft Word's transcription option to get a rough transcript. Edit the transcript for accuracy. Format your word document like so...

**Interviewer:** Name  
**Interviewee:** Name  
**Interview Setting:** Interview conducted in where & when.

(Start of Interview)  
**Interviewer/Name:** Question  
**Interviewee/Name:** Answer  
**Interviewer:** Question  
**Interviewee:** Answer

**Sample Generic Interview Questions / Conversation Starters**

- Tell me about ___________________.  
- What do you consider your greatest success?  
- If you could imagine yourself doing something else, what would it be?  
- How did you feel about__________________________ at first?  
- When did you become interested in ________________ and what made you interested in it?  
- Describe your experience with _______________.  
- What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?  
- What is something you need to be successful in ________________?  
- How did your childhood affect who you are today?  
- What are your hopes for the future?  
- Explain your personal favorite _________________.  
- Who influenced your skills the most? How so?  
- How was the subject as a child? (asked of someone who knows subject)  
- What advice would you offer to readers about _________________?  
- How did you feel when __________________________ happened?  
- Who is your mentor that helps you? How did they support you?  
- What did people around you think when they found out/heard about _________?  
- Why do you think people are interested in _____________________?
LQTQ News Story Structure

The most basic foundational structure you can rely on is the LQTQ (Lead - Quote - Transition - Quote) formula. For more information, check out Inverted Pyramid and Wineglass structures on the next pages.

Each box is a new paragraph. The story should flow from the most important to least important information. Use colorful DIRECT QUOTES to add opinions, emotions, and details.

Avoid summarizing the story in your own words at the end. Save a particularly colorful or thought-provoking quote to end. This is called a "kicker" quote!
Story Structure - Inverted Pyramid

What It Is
In journalism, the inverted pyramid story structure places the most important part of the article at the top of the story, facts of middling importance in the middle of the story, and the least important facts at the end.

How to Use the Inverted Pyramid
- The first part of your article should deal immediately with the information that makes the article important. People want to know in the first few paragraphs whether this is something they should care about. Unless you draw them in with something that seems really cool or important, they probably won't bother to finish reading.
- The lead paragraph should introduce a “wow” element and the next few paragraphs should expand on that “wow.” The writer should provide the essential facts right in the lead with the “who,” “what,” “where,” and “when” all known by the second paragraph. After covering these bases, the writer moves on to the “why” and “how” of the situation.
- The body of your article should deal with the “secondary” information: details that support and amplify the article's main point, reaction quotes from various interested people, or historical background that puts the story in context. Try to connect any new facts you introduce back to the “wow” element, but if there is limited relevance, just present the supporting information in a logical order.
- The last few paragraphs is the place for less crucial information that may be fascinating to readers with a special interest in the subject matter, but might seem to a general reader like “more than I wanted to know.”
- No summary or conclusion ties the story together – it just stops.

What It Achieves
By having the most important information at the top of the article, the reader immediately gets the main point of the story, and it is not necessary for a hurried reader to finish the entire piece to get the article's gist. In addition, by having the least important information at the bottom, the inverted pyramid format makes it easier for editors and layout designers to shorten the article if it does not fit the page.

When It Is Appropriate
Most basic news articles that are simply relating an event or telling facts use the inverted pyramid style. More in-depth news articles and sports articles, which often summarize their topic at the end, as well as creative features that try to grab the attention of the reader the entire time, should consider the wineglass format (next page).
Story Structure - Wineglass

What It Is
A wineglass is wide at the top, narrow in the middle, and wide again at the base. Wineglass format starts with the most important information and continues with information of decreasing importance. However, it differs from inverted pyramid format in that it ends the article with some kind of clincher – often a quote that summarizes the article or a zinger of a fact that leaves the reader with eyes wide or jaw dropped.

How to use wineglass structure
• The first part of your article should deal immediately with the critical information that distinguishes this article from all the others in the paper. Similar to the inverted pyramid, the lead paragraph here should still introduce a “wow” element and provide the essential facts right in the beginning with the “who,” “what,” “where,” and “when” all known by the second paragraph.
• The body of your article should deal with the “secondary” information that is, if possible, connected to the “wow” element in the article’s leading paragraphs.
• At the end, consider your article and its purpose. For a simple feature article about a person or a straightforward column, the summary ending is probably best, allowing you to recap that person’s accomplishments, tie your column’s ending back to your lead, or sign off with the humorous touch of an adjusted cliche.
• However, if you are writing an in-depth news or opinion article, your best bet is to introduce a different but related “take” on the situation. If it is a news article, you can bring up someone else’s solution to the problem you have been writing about. In an opinion article you can (and probably should) present your solution to the problem you are discussing.

What wineglass structure achieves
Wineglass story structure seeks to maintain the attention of the reader, and then offers a final flash of insight or color. As a disadvantage, it may be harder for the person placing the article to adjust its word count.

When wineglass structure is appropriate
Any article that is not straightforward reporting on an event or person may benefit from wineglass structure – for example, creative feature articles, impact pieces, and in-depth reporting. The structure can be used sparingly in news writing, but normally works better if the topic is not too serious.
Writing Leads

Length
Leads should generally be between 28 and 40 words in length.

“Wow” element
Look for the “wow” element: the one or two elements of the story that are shocking, funny, or exciting. If you are having trouble identifying a “wow” element, write a basic summary lead, pick out the most exciting word, and rearrange the paragraph to start with that word.

The six essential questions
Leads must answer the six essential questions (otherwise known as five Ws and an H): Who, What, When, Where, Why, How. Leads normally state the “what and why” first. Use “who” and “where” only when it is the “wow” element. “When” is almost never the “wow” element, so leads should not start with the “when.”

Names in leads
All people introduced in the lead should have their FULL NAMES written out and, if they are high school students, their grades or class should be spelled out. For sports, positions should be added to the grade/class to define role on the team. Be positive that all names written in your lead, or anywhere in your article, are accurate.

References (identifiers) in leads
Each name must be accompanied by an identifier: a job title, a faculty position, or a student’s class or role in an organization. Use the identifier most relevant to the main topic of the story.

Numbers in leads
Should the lead or any other sentence) begin with a number, SPELL OUT the entire number.

Quotes in leads
Quote leads should not be used unless suggested or at least approved by the editors or advisor. It is very difficult to create a good quote lead, and they are rarely used in professional journalism.

Eleven “forbidden words”
These words are not forbidden because they are naughty. Because we find a large number of articles in each issue are likely to start with these words, costing us lead variety, leads may NOT begin with any of the eleven “forbidden words”:
- A
- An
- The
- It
- At
- Here
- There
- During
- Students
- School name
- School city
- (Ayala)
- (Chino Hills)
Leads to Avoid

Label “The girls’ basketball team, coached by ...”
Date “It was January 29, 2006...”
Name “Joelle Smith couldn’t believe it when she was crowned Homecoming Queen.”
Grade “Junior Frisbee Thracklebush made the front page...”
Worthless quote “The homecoming dance was great!”
Yes/No question “Have you ever wondered what it’s like to be Chuckie Cheese for a day?”
“The purpose of...” “The purpose of the Key Club is to help those in need.”
“This year...” “This year, restrictions were placed on wrestling weight loss.”
“Goals of...” The goals of the administration were to...”

Dates & Times

Date of publication
The date of publication (DOP) and its relationship to the date of the news event can make a big difference in your story's impact. The DOP therefore affects how you write your article. If your story is expected to be published after an event, you would refer to events in the past time. If a story is expected to be published before, then you would write in the present or future tense in anticipation of it.

Calendar date
When using the calendar date, DO NOT:
- Abbreviate the month.
- Use “th,” “st,” or “nd” for numbered days.
- Use the word “on” before a date, whether it is a calendar date or the day of the week.

Times
Times are written out numerically with lowercase ‘a.m.’ or ‘p.m.’ tags with periods. Don’t use the redundant 10 p.m. tonight.
Numbers

- Numbers one through ten are spelled out.
- Numbers 11 and up are written numerically.
- When a number starts a sentence it MUST be spelled out no matter the value.

Names

- All names of people and places must be spelled correctly.
- Get the name right and record it in your reporter's notes and transcript.
- Check and double-check the Name List in the Resources folder. Use CTRL+F to find the right person to verify their the spelling of their name and grade level, then check again.

Acronyms

- To save space, acronyms (the initial letters of a group or organization) have no periods: we write FBI, not F.B.I.
- IF the group or organization cannot be recognized by their acronym, write out the name of the group or organization every time.
- If the group or organization can be recognized by the acronym, write the name of that group or organization in the first reference, then use the acronym through the rest of the article, but do not jam the two together.

Titles

Before computers, journalists underlined words that they wanted typesetters to put in italics. According to Associated Press style, reporters use quotation marks to indicate titles.
- Book titles, play titles, movie titles, titles of TV series or individual episodes, album names, song titles, clichés or adjusted clichés are set off with quotation marks.
- Publication titles (magazines, newspapers, reference works, etc.) get no special treatment. Just leave as is with appropriate capitalization.
- The Bulldog Times is italicized. Note don’t italicize "the"
Information is attributed to sources. Attributions carry the greatest weight when they contain a name, title, and established credibility. Once you get information from a source, continue up the chain of command to confirm the information at least twice. You gain authenticity by confirming your information, and you gain credibility by having a higher level of sourcing.

Never start attributions with “It was announced” or “It was claimed” or other such beginnings. The reader will wonder, “Who said this?” Identify your sources without delay.

Similar to English class where you must cite your sources for research projects or use any unoriginal content, any inclusion and use of information from other publication sources must be attributed. Attribution is not needed for common knowledge or facts that can be verified by many sources.

Any information that may be judgmental, may not be public knowledge, or may be challenged should be attributed.

The school’s mean SAT scores, AP test results, or budgetary statistics should all be attributed.
Quotations

Direct quotes are the preferred method of sourcing for the newspaper. Direct quotes present the word-for-word speech of a source in an interview. Strive for diversity in selecting the sources of your quotes. Few will want to read a publication if it covers the same few people repeatedly.

Writing and Editing Quotations

1) No quote should stand alone. Get quotes from at least THREE sources per story. A topic that deserves one quote deserves quotes from multiple sources. They should come from students, adults, faculty members, administration official, authorities on the subject – and express varying opinions to create balanced coverage. Try to get quotes from at least one student and one faculty.

2) Quotes should be between 5-20 words in length. For really colorful quotes in human interest stories, the limit is flexible to 40-70 words.

3) If the quote is really strong and colorful, consider putting it in a separate paragraph.

4) Be accurate; every quote must be word for word. Minor modifications can be made as long as the main idea is not altered. For instance, changing speech like "kinda" or "sort of" to "somewhat".

5) Use ellipses (…) to take out unnecessary words if you must but don't change the meaning.

6) Take out pause and filler words such as “um,” “eh,” “you know,” “well,” or "like."

7) Quotes should ONLY be tagged with “said” and place “said” after the speaker's name.

8) Avoid quotes from more than one person in a single paragraph. New person, new paragraph.

9) Use square brackets to clarify unclear words (often pronouns) in quotes.

   “I think [students] need less homework.” NOT: “I think they need less homework.”

10) If a quote is a complete sentence, capitalize the 1st letter, even if it isn't the start of your sentence.

11) Choose the best and most colorful quotes.

   Bad quote: “It was...really cool.” Better quote: “My experience was unforgettable because...”

12) Quote the opinions, state the facts. Paraphrasing someone's generic explanation is allowed.

   Quote: “I don't think the administration should rest until they find a solution.”

   DO NOT Quote: “The administration is looking for a solution.”

13) Try to average one quote for every other paragraph. To some extent, this will depend on the type of story. A “reaction” article should have more quotes than straight reporting. Keep in mind the LQTQ structure.

Double quotation marks Use double quotation marks to set off a direct quote or a slang word or slang phrase. In technical measurements, use an apostrophe to indicate feet, double quotation marks to indicate inches: 5’5”.

Place a period or comma inside quotation marks; place other punctuation marks that are part of your own writing outside quotation marks.

Single quotation marks Use single quotation marks in headlines to save space.

In the body of an article, use single quotation marks when quoting within a quotation. Example: “He told me, ‘We lost to a great team.’”
Punctuation

Commas & Periods with Quotation Marks
Commas and periods go inside the quotation marks, NOT AFTER. "I was flabbergasted that it happened to me," Lim said. "It made me realize how much I had to be grateful for."

Exclamation Points & Question Marks with Quotation Marks
- If the exclamation mark or question mark is a part of the original source's meaning, then it goes INSIDE the quotation marks.
- If the exclamation mark or question mark is a part of your own writing and not a part of

Parentheses
When using parentheses in your article (note that these are parentheses, not the squared-off brackets used in quotes to insert words of clarification), commas are not necessary. To set off a parenthetical phrase, use either parentheses without commas or commas without parentheses, but do not use both.

Apostrophes
Apostrophes are used in only three places:
- Contractions: Apostrophes can be used to mark the removal of one or more letters.
- Possessives: When one object owns another object, an apostrophe is used to show that the former object possesses the latter object. Remember three rules:
  - When the noun ends with any letter other than s or z, put the apostrophe at the end of the word and add s.
    - The boss's desk (because you pronounce it “boss-es”).
  - When the noun (singular or plural) ends in s, put the apostrophe after the s.
    - The scissors' edge (already pronounced “scissors” without an extra “s”)
    - Charles' hat (if you pronounce it just as “Charles”) but Charles's hat (if you pronounce it as “Charles-es”)
  - When forming the plural of a lowercase letter, add ‘s. This rule is more typographical than grammatical, is meant to serve clarity.
    - Do not write: Three ps.
    - Write: Three p’s.

Note on Plurals: Apostrophes used to denote the fact that there is more than one of an item, but the preferred style now excludes them.
- Write: 1980s, As, 6s
- Do not write: 1980’s, A’s, 6’s
Other Writing Style Tips

This miscellaneous writing style guide is arranged in alphabetical order by concept.

**A, an** Use the article a before consonant sounds: a historical event; a one-year term. Use the article an before vowel sounds: an energy crisis, an honorable man, an NBA record.

**Academic degrees** If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology. Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, master’s, etc. If you must abbreviate, abbreviate with periods: B.A., M.A., etc, (but Ph.D.).

**Academic departments** Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department.

**Academic titles** Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as chancellor, chairman, etc. when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere.

**Accept, except** Accept means to receive; except means to exclude.

**Accused** A person is accused of, not with a crime.

**Addresses** Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St. only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Spell out and capitalize these words when they are part of a formal street name without a number: Pennsylvania Avenue. All similar words (alley, drive, road, etc.) are spelled out.

**Affect, effect** Affect, as a verb, means to influence: The game will affect the standings. Effect, as a verb, means to cause: He will effect many changes in the company. Effect, as a noun, means result: The effect was overwhelming. He miscalculated the effect of his actions. Affect is best not used as a noun.

**Among, between** The maxim that between introduces two items and among introduces more than two covers most questions about how to use these words. Ex. The funds were divided among Ford, Carter, and McCarthy.
Because, since
Use because to denote a specific cause-effect relationship: He went because he was told. Since is acceptable in a casual sense when the first event in a sequence led logically to the second but was not its direct cause: They went to the game, since they had been given the tickets.

Beside, besides
Beside means at the side of. Besides means in addition to.

Capitalization
In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed here. Some basic principles:

- **Proper nouns**: Capitalize nouns that constitute the unique identification for a specific person, place, or thing: John, Mary, America, Boston, England. Some words, such as the examples just given, are always proper nouns. Some common nouns receive proper noun status when they are used as the name of a particular entity: General Electric, Gulf Oil.

- **Proper names**: Capitalize common nouns such as party, river, street, and west when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place, or thing: Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia. Lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent references: the party, the river, the street. Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: the Democratic and Republican parties, Maine and State streets, lakes Erie and Superior.

- **Popular names**: Some places and events lack officially designated proper names but have popular names that are the effective equivalent: the South Side (of Chicago), the Badlands (of North Dakota). The principle applies also to shortened versions of the proper names of one-of-a-kind events: the Series (for the World Series), the Derby (for the Kentucky Derby).

- **Derivatives**: Capitalize words that are derived from a proper noun and still depend on it for their meaning: American, Christian, Christianity, English, French, Shakespearean. Lowercase words that are derived from a proper noun but no longer depend on it for their meaning: French fries, Herculean, pasteurize, quixotic, Venetian blind.

- **Sentences**: Capitalize the first word in a statement that stands as a sentence. In poetry, capital letters are used for the first words of some phrases that would not be capitalized in prose.

- **Compositions**: Capitalize the principal words in the names of books, movies, plays, poems, operas, songs, radio and television programs, works of art, etc.

- **Titles**: Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. Lowercase formal titles when used alone or in constructions that set them off from a name by commas. Use lowercase at all times for terms that are job descriptions rather than formal titles.
Other Writing Style Tips cont.

**Cents** Spell out and lowercase the word cents, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar: 5 cents, 12 cents. Use the $ sign and decimal system for larger amounts: $1.01, $2.50.

**Colloquialisms** The word describes the informal use of a language. It is not local or regional in nature, as dialect is. Many colloquial words and phrases characteristic of informal writing and conversation are acceptable in some contexts but out of place in others. Examples include giveaway and phone. Other colloquial words normally should be avoided because they are substandard.

**Courtesy Titles** In general, do not use the courtesy titles Miss, Mr., Mrs., or Ms. on first and last names of the person: Betty Ford, Jimmy Carter.
Do not use Mr. in any reference unless it is combined with Mrs.: Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

**Disabled, handicapped, impaired** In general do not describe an individual as disabled or handicapped unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If such description must be used, make clear what the handicap is and how much the person’s physical or mental performance is affected.

Some terms include: disabled, a general term used for physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more of the major daily like activities; handicap should also be avoided in describing a disability.

Blind describes a person with complete loss of sight, so for others use terms such as visually impaired or person with low vision; deaf describes a person with a total hearing loss, so for others use partial hearing loss or partially deaf. Avoid using deaf mute. Do not use deaf and dumb. Mute describes a person who physically cannot speak, while others with speaking difficulties are speech impaired. Wheelchair user describes people who use wheelchairs for independent mobility, do not use confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair-bound. If a wheelchair is needed, say why.

**Dollars** Always lowercase. Use figures and the $ sign in all except casual references or amounts without a figure: The book cost $4. Dad, please give me a dollar. Dollars are flowing overseas. For specified amounts, the word takes a singular verb: He said $500,000 is what they want. For amounts of more than $1 million, use the $ and numerals up to two decimal places. Do not link the numerals and the word by a hyphen: It is worth $4.35 million. It is worth exactly $4,351,242. He proposed a $300 billion budget. The form for amounts less than $1 million: $4, $25, $500, $1,000, $650,000.
Other Writing Style Tips cont.

Editor Capitalize editor before a name only when it is an official corporate or organizational title. Do not capitalize as a job description.

Either...or, neither...nor The nouns that follow these words do not constitute a compound subject; they are alternate subjects and require a verb that agrees with the nearer subject: Neither they nor he is going. Neither he nor they are going.

Family names Capitalize words denoting family relationships only when they precede the name of a person or when they stand unmodified as a substitute for a person’s name: I wrote to Grandfather Smith. I wrote Mother a letter. I wrote my mother a letter.

Forecast Use forecast also for the past tense, not forecasted.

Fractions Spell out amounts less than 1 in stories, using hyphens between the words: two-thirds, four-fifths, etc.

It’s, its It’s is a contraction for it is or it has: It’s up to you. It’s been a long time. Its is the possessive form of the neuter pronoun: The company lost its assets.

Lay, lie The action word is lay. It takes a direct object. Laid is the form for its past tense and its past participle. Its present participle is laying. Lie indicates a state of reclining along a horizontal plane. It does not take a direct object. Its past tense is lay. Its past participle is lain. Its present participle is lying. When lie means to make an untrue statement, the verb forms are lie, lied, lying. Some examples:

- Present or future tenses: Right: I will lay the book on the table. The prosecutor tried to lay the blame on him. Wrong: He lays on the beach all day. I will lay down. Right: He lies on the beach all day. I will lie down.
- In the past tense: Right: I laid the book on the table. The prosecutor has laid the blame on him. Right: He lay on the beach all day. He has lain on the beach all day. I lay down. I have lain down.
- With the present participle: Right: I am laying the book on the table. The prosecutor is laying the blame on him. Right: He is lying on the beach. I am lying down.

Magazine names Capitalize the name but do not place it in quotes. Lowercase magazine unless it is part of the publication’s formal title: Harper’s Magazine, Newsweek magazine, Time magazine.
Other Writing Style Tips cont.

**Occupational titles** They are always lowercase.

**Personifications** Capitalize them: Grim Reaper, John Barleycorn, Mother Nature, Old man winter, Sol, etc.

**Ph.D., Ph.D.s** The preferred form is to say a person holds a doctorate and name the individual's area of specialty.

**Principal, principle** Principal is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree; She is the school principal. He was the principal player in the trade. Money is the principal problem. Principle is a noun that means a fundamental truth, law, doctrine or motivating force: They fought for the principle of self-determination.

**Quotations in the news** Never alter quotations even to correct minor grammatical errors or word usage. Casual minor tongue slips may be removed by using ellipses, but even that should be done with extreme caution. If there is a question about a quote, either don't use it or ask the speaker to clarify. Do not routinely use abnormal spellings such as "gonna" in attempts to convey regional dialects or mispronunciations. Such spellings are appropriate when relevant or help to convey a desired touch in a feature.

**Full vs. partial quotes** In general, avoid fragmentary quotes. If a speaker's words are clear and concise, favor the full quote. If cumbersome language can be paraphrased fairly, use an indirect construction, reserving quotation marks for sensitive or controversial passages that must be identified specifically as coming from the speaker.

**Slang** In general, avoid slang, the highly informal language that is outside of conventional or standard usage.

**Suit, suite** You may have a suit of clothes, a suit of cards, or be faced with a lawsuit. There are suites of music, rooms and furniture.

**Temperatures** Use figures for all except zero. Use a word, not a minus sign, to indicate temperatures below zero. Temperatures get higher or lower, but they don't get warmer or cooler.
That, which, who, whom (pronouns) Use who and whom in referring to people and animals with a name: John Jones is the man who helped me. Use that and which in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

Their, there, they're "Their" is a possessive pronoun: They went to their house. "There" is an adverb indicating direction: We went there for dinner. "There" also is used with the force of a pronoun for impersonal constructions in which the real subject follows the verb: There is no food on the table. "They're" is a contraction for they are.

Titles In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name. The basic guidelines:
- Lowercase: Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name: The president issued a statement. The pope gave his blessing.
- Lowercase and spell out titles in constructions that set them off from a name by commas: The vice president, Nelson Rockefeller, declined to run again. Paul VI, the current pope, does not plan to retire.
- The forms Mr., Mrs., Miss, and Ms. apply both in regular text and in quotations.

Formal titles: Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before one or more names: Pope Paul, President Washington, Vice presidents John Jones and William Smith. A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity, or academic accomplishment so specific that the designation becomes almost as much an integral part of an individual's identity as a proper name itself: President Clinton, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Dr. Marcus Welby, Pvt. Gomer Pyle.
Other titles serve primarily as occupational descriptions: astronaut John Glenn, movie star John Wayne, peanut farmer Jimmy Carter.

A final determination on whether a title is formal or occupational depends on the practice of the governmental or private organization that confers it. If there is doubt about the status of a title and the practice of the organization cannot be determined, use a construction that sets the name or the title off with commas.

Abbreviated titles: The following formal titles are capitalized and abbreviated as shown when used before a name outside quotations: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen. Spell out all except Dr. when they are used in quotations. All other formal titles are spelled out in all uses.
Other Writing Style Tips cont.

Royal titles: Capitalize king, queen, etc., when used directly before a name.

Titles of nobility: Capitalize a full title when it serves as the alternate name for an individual.

Past and future titles: A formal title that an individual formerly held, is about to hold, or holds temporarily is capitalized if used before the person's name. But do not capitalize the qualifying word: former President Ford, deposed King Constantine, Attorney General-designate Griffin B. Bell, acting Mayor Peter Barry.

Long titles: Separate a long title from a name by a construction that requires a comma: Charles Robinson, undersecretary for economic affairs, spoke. Or: The undersecretary for economic affairs, Charles Robinson, spoke.

Unique titles: If a title applies only to one person in an organization, insert the word the in a construction that uses commas: John Jones, the deputy vice president, spoke.

Who, whom Use "who" and "whom" for references to human beings and to animals with a name. Use "that" and "which" for inanimate objects and animals without a name. "Who" is the word when someone is the subject of a sentence, clause, or phrase: The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there? "Whom" is the word when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?

Who's, whose Who's is a contraction for who is, not a possessive: Who's there? Whose is the possessive: I don't know whose coat it is.
Writing Headlines & Picking Pull Quotes

**Headlines**
- Use the active voice
- Be accurate
- Use abbreviations sparingly
- Avoid headlines with weak verbs
- Avoid clichés
- Use attribution when needed
- Always have a subject and verb (except in rare circumstances)
- Prioritize Who, What, Why, and How type headlines (Avoid When and Where headlines)

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**Writers flourish with inspiration in celebration of National Novel Writing Month**

**From bystander to upstander: Safe School Ambassadors Program empowers students through two-day training event**

**High school mental health advocate uses social media for good**

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**Pull Quotes**
- Should contain important information or a colorful quote
- Should not misrepresent the actual intent of the quote being used
- Should include an attribution

> “Black Friday promotes capitalism and rugged individualism. People trample over each other to just get deals on overall worthless accessories and appliances.”

—freshman Jeremiah Park
Tips for Captions

• Should add to a story
• Identify important subjects when relevant
• Do not repeat headline
• Write in the active voice avoiding forms of “to be”
• Be connected to the story the photo accompanies
• Photographer, artist, or designer attributed

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) player Logan Cromwell (10) poses as a fantastical character as he listens to the foreground of the game’s story. D&D Club consists of improvisation, storytelling, and worldbuilding at its heart, which stimulates members’ imagination.

Ting Xiao: Finding Patterns in the Pool

Wren Bulawin, Staff Writer
October 27, 2022

To most, the pool is not much of interest; it is simply a tiled trench of chlorinated water. But, lifting each arm, performing each kick in a perfected stroke, senior Ting Xiao cannot help but notice each minute detail as he rockets through the water. With each breath, each disruptive wave to the water’s previously-undisturbed refractive pattern, he creates small yet precise adjustments in each repetitive movement. Like the water, each stroke is but an ever-changing pattern, one relying on the same creativity that he finds familiar within his life.

After all, Xiao has had an eye for patterns ever since his youth. From the speckles on drywall to the blue-and-white tiling of the school pool, he cannot help but pick up on the small, precise details within the world around him.
Peer Review Form

When your story draft is complete and ready for review, you will share your document with another staff member, who will read and offer feedback by filling out this form (providing comments directly on their draft is based on the discretion of the writer and reviewer). Digital versions (PDF and GoogleDoc) of this are found on GoogleDrive and physical copies are available in the classroom.

Peer Reviewer: ________________________ Writer: ________________________________
Story Idea: _______________________________________________________________

Read the entirety of the story before answering the questions below.

DESCRIBE
1. What is the angle of the story (not just the topic)? (What is the point or newsworthy focus of the story?)

2. What is the essential information (5Ws & H) for this story? Is it presented at the beginning of the story (lead)? What news structure format does it follow?

3. Who are the individuals that are quoted? Include first and last name, grade level, and/or position in organization. (There should be at least 3! Full name at first but then last name only)

4. Are the quotes colorful, interesting, and meaningful (not just clichés/conveying basic information)? Are all the quotes and facts/statistics clearly attributed and cited?

5. How does the writer make you feel about the topic?

ASSESS
6. What are the strengths of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

7. What are the weaknesses of the story? Cite evidence from the story itself to support your evaluation.

SUGGEST
8. Offer at least TWO suggestions for the writer. Explain WHY you’re making each suggestion and/or HOW the change will affect the story.
Posting on the Website

When a story is ready for publishing, the section editor will proceed to post the draft on our SNOSite, www.ayalabulldogtimes.org

1) Visit www.ayalabulldogtimes.org and scroll to the very bottom of the page to LOG IN and then login with your provided username & password.

2) Once on the SNO Dashboard, locate STORIES on the left column and hover to select ADD STORY.

3) Copy and paste (CTRL + C and CTRL + P) the story text from the final draft GoogleDoc that the writer submitted to you found in your department’s GoogleDrive into the text box of the ADD STORY page.

The next page explains the elements needed to successfully post a story onto our website.
Posting on the Website cont.

The following checklist can be completed in any order, but it important to occasionally SAVE DRAFT as you make edits to the story text and options in order to save your progress.

- Headline (Copy and paste from GoogleDoc / Rewrite if necessary)
- Proofread story in text box for formatting and accuracy
- Enter the First & Last name for **Writer's Name** and role for **Writer's Job Title**
- Mark the appropriate Category the story belongs to
- **Set Featured image** -> Upload Image -> Include **Caption** & attribute **Photographer**
- Optional: **Add SNO Story Element** for Pull Quotes, Galleries, etc.
- **PREVIEW** the page for a final review and revise as needed
Glossary

Below you will find some commonly used words in the Journalism industry.

Advertising: The activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, i.e., paid announcements in print.

Beat writer: A writer who covers a “beat,” or specific topic, place, or team.

Budget meeting: A regular meeting where the editorial staff talks about the schedule of stories for the next day.

Byline: The writer's name at the beginning of the article.

Circulation: The total number of people who subscribe to the newspaper or purchase the paper. At a school, it is the number of people who receive the newspaper.

Columnist: A writer of a column that appears regularly. Columnists frequently offer their opinions on current events.

Cutline: The caption accompanying a photo.

Dateline: The line at the beginning of a news story that gives the date and place of the story's origin.

Edit: To revise, proofread, write a headline, or approve a story for publication.

Editorial: An article stating the opinion of the publication.

Firsthand information: Information gathered about an event through direct experience.

Feature story: A story in which the basic purpose is something other than news.

Flag (or banner): The name of the publication on the front page, set in a particular style of type so it is easily recognized.

Foreign correspondent: A journalist who gathers news outside the United States.

Journalist: A newspaper editor or reporter who gathers information and writes articles.

Kill: To remove a story or ad from the newspaper.

Layout: A plan or sketch of each page a publication indicating where photos, articles, ads, and headlines will be placed. It is also the act of placing photos, articles, ads, and headlines.

Lead: The first paragraph of a story, designed to give readers the most important information (who, what, when, where, why, how), and “lead” them to continue reading.

Masthead: A box of information, usually found on the editorial page, containing the name of the newspaper, its ownership, management, and possibly staff.

News story: An article that includes the important details of a newsworthy event.

Newsworthy: Events and information that readers want and need to know immediately; information that might have an impact on people’s lives.

Obituary: A published notice of a death, sometimes with a brief biography of the deceased.

Photo credit: A byline for the photographer, crediting him or her for a photo.

Publisher: The person responsible for the total operation of the newspaper.

Refer: Lines of type and sometimes art that refer readers to stories inside the newspaper.


Scoop: An exclusive story.

Syndicate: A news service that sells columns, comics, and specialty features to newspapers throughout the country.

Tip: Information from a source outside the newspaper leading to an interesting news story.

Wire service: A company or cooperative that sells stories and photos, and sends them via satellite or computer to newspapers for them to publish.