



Writing Copy

Ideas for Great Writing

1. Keep Sentence Structure Simple

Place subjects close to their verbs. Verbs and pronouns must agree in number with their subject. It is best to use action verbs rather than passive verbs. Example, Senior John Gonzalez pins. . . NOT “is pinning.”

2. Avoid Vague Words

Words such as “many,” “a lot,” “some,” or “a few” are weak and don’t really tell your readers anything.

3. Be Specific and Accurate

Good copy includes specific, accurate details. Saying that a team had “a 7-3 season” tells your readers nothing.

4. Shorter Paragraphs are More Inviting

Keep most of your paragraphs under 40 words. Readers are more likely to skip over big blocks of text.

5. Keep your Reader’s Attention

Make copy boxes easier to read by adding fact boxes, Q & A, bio boxes, timelines, quote collections and public opinion polls.

6. Avoid Using the Phrase “This Year” and the Name of Your School

What other year besides the current year is being highlighted in the yearbook? What other school is being covered in your yearbook? Your readers already know this.

7. Write Copy in the Third Person

Keeping copy in the third person maintains objectivity. Avoid using first person pronouns like “I,” “we,” “our,” etc.

8. Do Not Editorialize

Using quotes is a good way to keep your copy objective. Always have three sources in every story along with good quotes. Never make an opinion statement that can not be attributed to a specific source.

9. Use Correct Capitalization and Spelling

Capitalize all names of persons, cities, schools, and mascots. Do not capitalize the names of departments or general subjects such as “physical education.” Capitalize proper nouns such as “English.” For specific class titles such as “Art History,” use capitals; for general titles such as “math” do not capitalize. A person’s title should be capitalized if it precedes his or her name, such as Principal Harold Walker. If the title follows the name, it should not be capitalized: Harold Walker, principal. Don’t forget to spell check and proofread!

10. Use the Language of your Readers

Write the way you and your friends talk. If you don’t talk in complex sentences seen in term papers, don’t write them. Do remember to avoid slang and to obey basic rules of grammar.