

News Magazine Critique

Kettle Moraine Press Association
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
Continuing Education Services
2005 Roseman Hall
Whitewater, WI 53190

Newspaper Name

Year

Adviser's Name

School

Address

City

State

Zip

TOTAL POINTS

	Max Score	Your Score		Max Score	Your Score
Reporting	(220)		Opinion	(100)	
Writing	(170)		Bonus		
Editing	(190)				
Design	(300)		TOTAL	(880-980)	

With Opinion RATINGS

All-KEMPA	980-880
First Place	879-785
Second Place	784-685
Third Place	684-590

Without Opinion RATINGS

All-KEMPA	870-785
First Place	784-695
Second Place	694-610
Third Place	609-520

Introduction

Student newspapers demonstrate the fundamental principles of scholastic journalism: relevant stories, well-researched writing, inclusive coverage, dynamic photography and functional layout and design.

The Kettle Moraine Press Association (KEMPA) is dedicated to those basic principles. To this end, KEMPA encourages leadership, responsibility and objectivity for all newspaper staff members. This critique is just one of the ways in which KEMPA promotes quality scholastic publications.

• Scorebook

This score-book serves two purposes. First, and most importantly, the score-book is a teaching tool. It gives newspaper staffs an objective analysis of how well their publications exemplify the fundamentals of scholastic journalism. Secondly, the score-book rewards a newspaper staff for everything the staff members have done well. Any criticism is constructive by its very nature.

• Scoring decisions

Scoring decisions are made against basic standards of scholastic journalism. Occasionally, newspaper staffs choose to ignore certain standards. That editorial decision is the privilege of the staff. In evaluation of a publication, however, a judge cannot make scoring exceptions because a staff made a decision to follow a certain “tradition” of the school. The judge is obligated to score each newspaper against set standards.

• Copyright

Simply attributing work to its creator is not the same as receiving consent to publish. Photos, graphics and art republished with permission should be credited with “Photo used with permission of...” or a similar statement. Using “Photo courtesy of...” does not tell readers or judges whether you have permission. Do not use “Used with permission” unless you have permission.

Use of apparently copyrighted materials without permission will result in disqualification from receiving an ALL-KEMPA rating.

• Plagiarism

Plagiarism might be as unintentional as failing to attribute a quote to its source or as deliberate as sub-

mitting a movie review downloads from the Web.

If a judge finds evidence of plagiarism in an entry, he or she will reduce the score in that area with an explanation noted. Furthermore, that publication is disqualified from receiving an ALL-KEMPA rating.

Judges should note that high quality student work with a range of expert sources does not necessarily point to plagiarism.

• Judges

KEMPA judges are qualified journalists, or past or present advisers of top-rated publications. A publication’s evaluation is likely to be helpful, fair and well-substantiated.

• Concerns

If you have concerns or comments about the scoring you received or suggestions for improvement of this scoring booklet, please go to www.kempajournalism.org to find the current board of directors and send an email to the current president.

Judging

After tabulating the publication’s final score, determine the rating using the correct chart, below. Publications for which you did NOT apply the “Opinion” section of this form should be rated using the “Publications WITHOUT Opinion Section” listing, and publications for which you DID apply the “Opinion” section should be rated using the higher totals in the “Publications WITH Opinion Section” listing.

For Publications WITHOUT Opinion Section:

All-Kempa: 870-785
1st Place: 784-695
2nd Place: 694-610
3rd Place: 609-520

For Publications WITH Opinion Section:

All-KEMPA: 980-880
1st Place: 879-785
2nd Place: 784-685
3rd Place: 684-590

Acknowledgements

KEMPA thanks the Maryland-District of Columbia Scholastic Press Association and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for allowing us to borrow freely from their scorebooks. (06-2007)

Reporting

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Sources and Information

- (20) 1. Stories include a broad range of student and official voices, both inside and outside the school.
- (10) 2. Information and quotes are fully and properly attributed. Unnamed sources are used only in exceptional circumstances.
- (10) 3. Primary sources are used when possible. Stories do not rely heavily on what has been reported in other media. Second-hand information is avoided.
- (10) 4. Stories, are well-sourced and attributed; any assertions are backed up with facts and statistics.
- (10) 5. Stories strive to be balanced and fair. All sides are given an equal opportunity to be heard.
- (5) 6. When used, coverage of student opinion polls emphasizes a summary of results. The coverage indicates the size and range of sampling, and when sampling was taken.
- (5) 7. Expert, impartial sources from outside the school are sought out and quoted when appropriate.
- (70) **SUBTOTAL**

General Coverage

- (20) 1. Stories featured throughout the magazine are timely, relevant, and consequential to a broad range of students.
- (20) 2. Content is balanced and thoroughly researched.
- (10) 3. Coverage emphasizes school-related topics. Stories about community, regional, national, or international events focus on how the events or topics affect students.
- (10) 4. Coverage (especially of clubs, teams, or school events) includes a wide variety of topics, teams, ideas and individuals, not just the most popular ones.
- (10) 5. Stories are comprehensible to outside readers who may not have the same background knowledge of an event as current students or staff.
- (10) 6. Stories emphasize material of consequence to most students while taking all readers into account.
- (10) 7. Stories are as free of editorializing as possible.
- (5) 8. When covering controversial events, popular notions, or school policies, etc, the publication demonstrates it will cover all sides and voices as fairly as possible and avoids serving as a PR device for the school or district.

(95) SUBTOTAL

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Feature Coverage

All reporting should meet the requirements of General Coverage (above), however, stories or sections of the magazine that are intended to be featurize in nature should also meet the following criteria.

- (20) 1. Relevant topics and issues are expanded into effective, in-depth presentations using varied story formats.
- (10) 2. Sidebars and graphics are used when appropriate to help readers grasp larger, complex stories.
- (10) 3. Any personality profiles of students, faculty, or others offer realistic, newsworthy portrayals.
- (10) 4. Puzzles, jokes, horoscopes, gossip columns, etc. are omitted in favor of more interesting, entertaining, or newsworthy subject matter.
- (5) 5. Equal coverage is devoted to school-related arts programs, performances, and exhibits and non-school related works; the publication does not ignore school-related stories in lieu of only covering professional works.

(55) SUBTOTAL

REPORTING SCORES

Sources/Info	(70 possible)
General Coverage	(95 possible)
Feature Coverage	(55 possible)
Section Total	(220 possible)

Writing

Style

- (20) 1. Writing style is consistent, whether AP or other style.
- (20) 2. Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar are used.
- (10) 3. Most writing is in active voice.
- (10) 4. Writers avoid big words and flowery language, relying instead on concrete examples that make their point.
- (10) 5. Writers make use of frequent, conversational quotes from appropriate and interesting sources.
- (10) 6. Paragraphs vary in length but are usually short.
- (10) 7. Style may be colorful, but the writing and reporting remain objective.

(10) 8. Writing remains purposeful and professional; writing does not include sarcasm, inside jokes, slang, etc.

(100) **SUBTOTAL**

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Structure

- (10) 1. Leads are creative and interesting, grabbing the attention of the readers and setting up both the purpose and tone of the stories.
- (10) 2. The nut graf is at or near the beginning, most often no more than four paragraphs into the story.
- (10) 3. Quotes are used effectively to move the story. Stories incorporate effective expository writing between quotes to provide context and adequate transitions.
- (10) 4. Any anecdotes used relate directly to the main theme of the story.
- (10) 5. Stories, provide sufficient background and context for the reader.
- (10) 6. Stories are concise and coherent, yet long enough to tell the story while including details -- especially the Ws and H -- that readers need to know.
- (10) 7. All information is properly attributed to sources to avoid unintentional editorialization.

(70) **SUBTOTAL**

WRITING SCORES

Style	(100 possible)
Structure	(70 possible)
Section Total	(170 possible)

Editing

Copy

- (20) 1. Stories are factually correct.
- (10) 2. Stories are free of potential libel.
- (10) 3. Writing is original, free of plagiarism.
- (10) 4. Stories do not leave readers' questions unanswered.
- (10) 5. Stories do not make assertions that are not fully supported.
- (10) 6. Names and titles are consistent; all speakers identified; all have full name on first reference.
- (10) 7. Successive paragraphs in a story do not begin with the same words.

- (10) 8. Sentence structure is clear and varied.
- (10) 9. Subjects and verbs agree, pronouns and antecedents agree, pronoun references are clear, and verb tenses are consistent and appropriate.
- (10) 10. Except where appropriate to the tone of the story, "said" is used in attribution, rather than synonyms.
- (10) 11. The first quotes almost always appear near the beginning of a story, ideally by the third or fourth paragraph of most stories.
- (120) **SUBTOTAL**

Headlines and Cutlines

- (10) 1. All photos and art include a credit, and all photos have their own cutlines adjacent to the photo.
- (10) 2. Cutlines say more than what is obvious in the photo. They should consist of more than one sentence.
- (10) 3. Cutlines fully identify subjects and provide all necessary information.
- (10) 4. Cutlines avoid clichéd expressions such as "pictured above," "poses for the camera," "left to right."
- (10) 5. Headlines accurately capture the story's main idea.
- (5) 6. Standard headlines contain a verb, stated or implied, and are written in the present or future tense.
- (5) 7. Display headlines are attractive and are paired with a standard headline; sub decks are acceptable.
- (5) 8. Headlines avoid breaking single thoughts, proper names, or prepositional phrases over two lines.
- (5) 9. Headlines are generally downstyle, use single quote marks, and avoid the use of articles, "a," "an," and "the." Any exceptions to these rules are done for special effect.
- (70) **SUBTOTAL**

EDITING SCORES

Copy	(120 possible)
Headlines/Cutlines	(70 possible)
Section Total	(190 possible)

Design

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Cover

- (20) 1. The design is visually attractive, grabs reader's attention, and effectively uses typography, color, and graphics.
- (10) 2. Cover includes a consistent and attractive nameplate or logo, as well as issue number or publication date.
- (10) 3. The cover gives an immediate sense of the issue's style and voice, creating a unique impression of the magazine.
- (10) 4. The cover has a visual appeal and gives a strong indication of or connection to the issue's cover story or issue theme.
- (50) **SUBTOTAL**

Layout

- (10) 1. Spreads effectively include a variety of photos, art, pull quotes, infographics, and/or other graphic elements.
- (10) 2. A dominant visual element appears on each spread. Other elements/photographs/art contrast in size and shape; placement varies to avoid visual monotony.
- (10) 3. Pages make use of a grid or modular layout in general but may creatively, yet effectively, "break" this grid when appropriate to achieve a purposeful effect.
- (10) 4. Pages make creative and effective use of color, where applicable and appropriate.
- (10) 5. Long articles are broken up with meaningful subheadings, graphics, or photos to make copy reader friendly and less "gray."
- (10) 6. Pages are balanced and full, with any white space used purposefully and to good effect.
- (10) 7. In-depth or special sections are designed creatively and in good taste. Two page spreads are designed as a single unit with dominant art.
- (5) 8. The cover story and/or stories related to the issue's theme connect visually with the issue's cover design.
- (5) 9. Folios on inside pages, whether located on the top or bottom of pages, include publication name, date, and page number; folios may also include section labels.
- (5) 10. Any ads are grouped at the bottom or outer edges of pages and are not erroneously incorporated into story modules. They do not appear on page one or on opinion pages.

- (5) 11. Internal margins are consistent, with intentional, appropriate spacing around text and boxes within a modular design.
- (5) 12. Pages mix vertical and horizontal elements.
- (5) 13. Borders, screens, and other decorative elements are used with restraint.
- (100) SUBTOTAL**

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Photography, Illustrations, Infographics

- (10) 1. Visual elements are original, clearly avoiding copyright violation.
- (10) 2. The publication makes good use of infographics such as maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams. These visuals are accurate, complete, immediately understandable, easily followed and properly attributed.
- (10) 3. Cartoons, comic strips and illustrations are attractive and understandable at a glance. Artists use shading when warranted. Clip art is avoided.
- (10) 4. Cartoons, illustrations, infographics and photographs are effective and relevant to the stories in which they are used; graphics are professional and are not used merely to "fill up space."
- (10) 5. Photos are newsworthy and/or match the genre, story and style of the magazine or theme.
- (10) 6. Photos are generally action-orientated rather than posed. Group shots are used sparingly, if at all.
- (10) 7. Photos are cropped to remove extraneous background and feature the subject, but not so tightly that body parts are cut off or the subject is boxed in.
- (10) 8. Photos are focused and well composed with sharp contrast and details.
- (5) 9. Faces in photos are no smaller than the size of a dime.
- (5) 10. People in photos face toward the related story, not off the page or into the wrong story.
- (5) 11. All photos contain people (with rare exceptions for newsworthiness, action or emotion).
- (5) 12. All photos except mugshots provide photo credit.
- (100) SUBTOTAL**

Typography

- (10) 1. Body type is easy to read. The basic column width has eye appeal and is not too wide or too narrow.
- (10) 2. Headline type selection for the magazine is contemporary and read-

able and complements the look of the publication.

- (10) 3. Cutlines are in a different but appropriate typeface from the copy so they stand out.
- (10) 4. The publication consistently uses one or two headline typefaces with variation on the in-depth or special interest pages. Typefaces of kickers and drop headlines complement typefaces of primary headlines.
- (10) 5. All body type, cutline type, byline type, etc, is used consistently throughout the publication to ensure each aspect appropriately stands apart.
- (50) **SUBTOTAL**

Judge's comments and suggestions for improvement.

DESIGN SCORES

Cover	(50 possible)
Layout	(100 possible)
Photography/Graphics	(100 possible)
Typography	(50 possible)
Section Total	(300 possible)

Opinion

KEMPA recognizes not all magazines will include a designated Opinion section or reviews. This section is not required, but any magazine that includes commentary writing should meet the criteria listed here. If the publication you are reviewing does NOT include an editorial section or any columns or reviews, then skip this section and compute the final score and placement using the total labeled "Without Opinion Section." If the publication DOES include editorials or reviews, then please score them using the listings below, and tabulate the overall score and award using the higher total labeled "With Opinion Section."

Editorials and Columns

- (10) 1. Staff editorials demonstrate leadership through responsible commentary on a wide range of subjects of consequence to students. Topics are timely, relevant, and consequential to a broad range of students.
- (10) 2. Editorials and columns incorporate research, interviews, and background material, as well as attribution, to support opinions; writers do not rely completely on personal opinion.
- (10) 3. Editorials are concise and persuasively constructed. Columns have a distinct purpose (to inform, entertain, or persuade) and are not used for inside jokes or personal vendettas.
- (10) 4. Editorials frame the issue and then take a clear stand on that issue.
- (5) 5. When possible, writers offer solutions to the problems they present.

- (5) 6. Opinion section demonstrates the publication is not reluctant to confront school officials or district policies, or to challenge popular notions.
- (5) 7. The pronoun “we,” meaning the editorial board, is used in editorials and the pronoun “you” is avoided except when used for special emphasis.
- (5) 8. Editorial page allows opportunity for reader feedback.
- (60) **SUBTOTAL**

Judge’s comments and suggestions for improvement.

Reviews

- (10) 1. Reviews clearly state the opinions of the reviewer and consistently reinforce said opinion.
- (10) 2. Equal space is devoted to reviewing both school-related programs, performances, and exhibits and non-school related works; in other words, the publication does not ignore school-related stories in lieu of only covering professional entertainment, such as movies or concerts.
- (10) 3. Specific examples are used to support the reviewer’s opinions and generalizations.
- (10) 4. Reviewers provide necessary background to provide readers with an understanding of their appraisal.
- (10) 5. Reviewers present their points of view effectively and articulately.
- (50) **SUBTOTAL**

OPINION SCORES

Editorial	(60 possible)
Reviews	(50 possible)
Section Total	(110 possible)

Bonus Points

- (5) 1. Some in-depth packages, themes, or features are handled with outstanding care, creativity and insight.
- (5) 2. The cover and/or other design elements are handled with particular excellence.
- (5) 3. Coverage of the school community as a whole is superior.
- (5) 4. Student photography is unique and outstanding.
- (5) 5. The publication takes particular care to address controversial topics or give a voice to students and ideas that are often ignored.
- (0) **SUBTOTAL**

Judge's Summary Comments