



Newspaper Evaluation

Newspaper Name _____ Year _____

Adviser's Name _____

School _____

To have your newspaper evaluated, it must be a current KEMPA member.

CATEGORY	TOTAL POINTS	
Coverage (20 percent)	____ /200	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL-KEMPA 900-1,000
Writing and Editing (35 percent)	____ /350	<input type="checkbox"/> FIRST PLACE 800-899
Design & Graphics (20 percent)	____ /200	<input type="checkbox"/> SECOND PLACE 700-799
Photography (15 percent)	____ /150	<input type="checkbox"/> THIRD PLACE 0-699
Leadership (10 percent)	____ /100	
Total	____ /1,000	

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION

This evaluation form is designed to provide a framework for the judge in evaluating the newspaper, to reward the staff for creativity and accomplishment and to provide suggestions for improvement for future issues. We have tried to make this guide as open-ended as possible to allow the judge to consider all aspects of the newspaper and its audience.

KEMPA judges have earned a JEA Critique Training badge and are listed in JEA's national judging database. Scoring decisions are made against basic standards of scholastic journalism. Occasionally, staffs choose to ignore certain standards. That editorial decision is the privilege of the staff. In evaluating a publication, however, a judge cannot make scoring exceptions because the staff made a decision to follow a certain "tradition" of the school. The judge will score each newspaper against set standards.

A publication's evaluation is intended to be helpful, fair and well-substantiated.

If you have any concerns or comments about the scoring you received or suggestions for improvement of this scoring booklet, please contact KEMPA at KEMPAjournalism@gmail.com.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JUDGE

Be sure to point out areas of excellence and let the staff know where they have excelled. Please use the space provided for suggestions and comments that will help the staff understand concerns and problem areas and how they might be improved.

If the newspaper is receiving a supercritique, write comments, directions, questions, arrows, etc. right on the newspaper **in addition to your notes on this form**. Return the newspapers to UW-Whitewater.

If you find evidence of plagiarism in an entry, reduce the score in that area with an explanation. Plagiarism and/or use of apparently copyrighted materials without permission will result in disqualification from receiving an ALL-KEMPA rating.

If you have questions, please contact KEMPA at KEMPAjournalism@gmail.com.

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262-472-1691

Acknowledgements

KEMPA thanks the Kansas Scholastic Press Association and the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association for allowing us to borrow items from their critique booklets.

All KEMPA publications are critiqued by non-member judges located in geographic areas outside of Wisconsin and Illinois.

COVERAGE

☒ **STANDARD:** Coverage is complete and thorough and helps to tell the story of the current moment at the school using both words and photos. Staff showcases an awareness of coverage options with an emphasis on the factual, unique and compelling.

NEWS AND FEATURE COVERAGE

- The publication attempts to reach the whole school community, is comprehensible to outside readers and emphasizes materials of interest and consequence to most students.
- The publication centers on school news, yet seeks to show how other information about the community, regional, national and international events affect students.
- The publication appears lively, entertaining, enterprising and well-balanced. It incorporates modern trends appropriate to readers in its community.
- Minority groups and diversity issues within a school or community are presented.
- Articles appear to be written following thorough reporting. When applicable, at least three sources have been used.
- Standard school events such as homecoming, school musical and graduation are covered.
- The publication covers aspects of the academic side of school.
- The staff covers subjects of controversy and impact within the school.
- A balance of briefs and detailed accounts occur in the publication.
- A variety of news sources is evidenced.
- Student organizations are covered (government, clubs, activities, etc.).
- A variety of features is offered. Features are stimulating, interesting, entertaining and/or timely.
- Personality profiles offer realistic, newsworthy portrayals.
- Puzzles, jokes and humor elements are permissible but limited. Horoscopes and gossip columns are omitted.
- Polls/surveys emphasize summary results and indicate size and range of sampling and timeliness.
- The publication presents original, thoroughly researched subject matter.

News and Feature Coverage Strengths:

News and Feature Coverage Recommendations:

COVERAGE, cont.

SPORTS COVERAGE

- Sports coverage is appropriate for the size of the publication and the size of the school.
- The staff provides equal and adequate coverage for both boys and girls athletics.
- The staff supplements athletic coverage with coverage of intramurals (if offered) and non-organized and outside-of-school athletic involvement.
- Schools without competitive team sports provide stories on intramurals and/or individual sports and leisure activities.
- The publication gives readers information about approaching events, recalls highlights of past events with emphasis on what students do not know and information about opposing teams.
- The publication provides well-rounded season coverage.
- The paper may show materials about community, collegiate or professional competition geared toward informing students and including a strong local angle.
- Coverage is original and includes related interviews, personality profiles, surveys and other feature material.
- Some statistics and summaries are provided. Some briefs exist. Playoff, league and conference results are evidenced.

Sports Coverage Strengths:

Sports Coverage Recommendations:

Score for Coverage

0	100	140	170	200
Needs improvement	Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent	

Judges: The numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.

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WRITING AND EDITING

☑ **STANDARD:** Reporting is authoritative, trustworthy and clearly stated. Student staff members demonstrate quality writing and research skills. Writing is free of typos, style mistakes, spelling errors and grammatical oversights.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Proper sourcing is evident in all stories. Attributions are used appropriately.
- Journalistic writing style is consistent, whether AP or other style, and appropriate to story topic with third person point of view and active voice verb dominating.
- Paragraphs vary in length and are usually short. Successive paragraphs in a story do not repeat same words in the beginning. Sentences are clear, varied.
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are covered. Accuracy is stressed.
- People are completely identified in a consistent style.

Basic Principles Strengths:

Basic Principles Recommendations:

STORIES IN GENERAL

- Leads vary in structure and catch reader's interest.
- Transitions are evident in stories.
- Objectivity is a major goal.
- Stories reflect sound interviewing and quotes are used effectively.
- Stories stress the "why" element.
- Stories provide sufficient background and context for the reader.
- Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar are used.

Stories in General Strengths:

Stories in General Recommendations:

WRITING AND EDITING, cont.

NEWS STORIES

- Topics of news stories are timely.
- Writing is free of editorializing.
- News leads reflect a humanistic angle and appeal to the reader.
- Future events are alluded to in the story.
- News stories may follow inverted pyramid or news feature approach.
- Quotes are used effectively to move the story, but not overused.
- Stories provide sufficient background and context for the reader.

News Stories Strengths:

News Stories Recommendations:

FEATURE STORIES

- Story topics are varied, original and thoroughly researched.
- Leads set tone and focus. They are creative and interesting, grabbing the reader's attention.
- Quotes are used effectively to move the story.
- Stories develop a central idea.
- Anecdotes, when appropriate, add life to stories.
- Concrete examples don't just tell the reader what happened; they show it.

Feature Stories Strengths:

Feature Stories Recommendations:

WRITING AND EDITING, cont.

SPORTS STORIES

- The how and why of action is emphasized.
- Seasonal coverage follows descending order of importance. Stories avoid chronological accounts.
- Writers use colorful style but objective straight reporting. Columns are not preachy.
- Stories avoid clichés and jargon.
- Stories are well-sourced and attributed; assertions are backed up with facts and statistics.
- Opposing teams and coaches are interviewed and their viewpoints included in stories.
- Leads avoid combining team name, school name or nickname and/or sport name.

Sports Stories Strengths:

Sports Stories Recommendations:

HEADLINES, CAPTIONS

- Headlines attract reader's attention and emphasize accuracy and summary.
- Headlines avoid overuse of school name, abbreviations, repetitions, split-infinitives, separation of adverbs and adjectives from verbs and nouns, separation of preposition from object.
- Varied styles of headlines can and should be used.
- The caption's first sentence is in present tense and the remaining sentence(s) in past tense. Captions avoid clichéd phrases. All people are identified. A caption appears with each photo.
- Captions say more than what is obvious in the photo. They answer who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Captions avoid "pictured above," "poses for the camera," "left to right."
- All photos and art are credited, and all photos have their own captions adjacent to the photo.

Headlines/Cutlines Strengths:

Headlines/Cutlines Recommendations

Score for Writing and Editing

0 100 200 250 300 350
Needs improvement Average/Good Very Good Excellent
Judges: The numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 350.

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DESIGN & GRAPHICS

☑ **STANDARD:** News publication shows staff understanding of basic design concepts with graphic accent. Pages reveal unity of purpose with balance, dominance and perspective. Design helps communicate the message of the coverage without dominating that message. Design is clean, clear and appealing.

OVERALL DESIGN

- Modular or mostly modular design is evident throughout the publication.
- Pages are well-balanced with a dominant element toward the top. Other visual items are used to help the reader navigate the page.
- Hierarchy is evident, with most important content at the top of the page.
- Tombstoning and butting heads are eliminated as much as possible.
- A photo or piece of art should not separate a story from its headline.
- Headlines' point sizes and/or weights vary according to story importance and length so that emphasis decreases down the page.
- Column widths are appropriate, not too wide or too narrow, optimally no wider than 39 characters.
- Longer blocks of text are broken up with subheads, lead-ins, pull quotes and other devices that minimize gray space (solid blocks of text).
- Captions are set in a contrasting or sans serif typeface.
- Leading is appropriate and kerning is minimally used when necessary.
- Design is creative and all elements work together to tell each story.
- Pages mix vertical and horizontal elements.
- White space is used well and is purposeful. Internal margins are consistent. At least an "em" space surrounds type that is boxed and surrounds the boxes themselves..
- Rules, dingbats, typographic devices are used to enhance or support content, not overwhelm or take away from information.
- Ads are grouped at the bottom or outer edges of pages. They do not appear on page one or the opinion pages.
- Editorial/opinion pages should include either a condensed or full masthead.
- Folios appear on all pages and include publication name, page numbers and dates.
- Column logos, bylines and standing heads are consistent throughout and well-designed.

Overall Design Strengths:

Overall Design Recommendations:

DESIGN & GRAPHICS, cont.

GRAPHICS

- Graphics are not used for their own sake but to enhance the story.
- An infographic contains illustrations or graphics to represent and visually interpret the facts and figures within. Infographics should include source(s), a headline, an explanation and designer credit.
- Editorial/opinion cartoons convey the message simply with little text needed.
- Alternative story forms feature strong, creative visual elements relevant to the story being told.
- Designers have utilized “quick-read” elements for the reader.
- Color and gray tones have been used effectively.

Graphics Strengths:

Graphics Recommendations:

TYPOGRAPHY

- Typography provides effective contrast so that individual pieces of coverages are distinct.
- The staff avoided the use of overly decorative typefaces that draw attention to themselves.
- A consistent style for headlines is used.
- Typographical points of entrance such as large initial letters, pulled quotes and fact boxes have been effectively incorporated.

Typography Strengths:

Typography Recommendations:

Score for Design & Graphics

0 100 140 170 200
Needs improvement Average/Good Very Good Excellent

Judges: The numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

☒ **STANDARD:** Photography throughout the publication indicates staff has an awareness of the critical role quality photography plays in journalism. Sound composition and strong technical quality are apparent throughout the newspaper with few lapses. Photographers use exposure, reporting and camera skills to give readers an artistic portrait of the school's news.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photos are carefully selected for maximum reader interest and reproduction quality.
- Photos are cropped to the center of interest and the center of interest is focused.
- Elements of composition are incorporated to create artistic photos that fulfill journalistic story-telling expectations.
- Content of photos is newsworthy, significant or unusual and is of relevance to the audience.
- A variety of photos — action, mugs, groups, objects — is published. There is evidence that there is photo coverage of news and athletic events.
- Photos are free of technical flaws while shooting and are not overly repaired in an editing program.
- Photo cutouts are executed well and are appropriate to the design of the story.
- Photos have been adjusted for proper contrast.
- Overall crisp appearance of photos eliminates pixelation and distortion through stretching.
- Photos from outside sources are credited properly.

Photography Strengths:

Photography Recommendations:

Score for Photography

0	75	100	125	150
Needs improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent

Judges: The numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 150.

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LEADERSHIP

☒ **STANDARD:** News publication demonstrates awareness and energy for using printed words and images to lead readers. Editors clearly value freedom of expression granted by the First Amendment.

LEADERSHIP

- Publication expresses concern for the well-being of the school, students, staff and faculty through commentary in editorials and opinion columns.
- Publication expresses concern for the well-being of the community through commentary relevant to student readers in editorials and opinion columns.
- There is evidence of thorough research covering all aspects of the topic being covered.
- There is a mix of coverage of non-school events and issues relevant to students that will make students well-informed citizens.
- Publication attempts to cover topics and issues of concern to its main audience.
- Page one of the publication contains information that is most significant of the content within the publication.
- The publication furnishes students with information of immediate and long-range effects on students' lives.

Leadership Strengths:

Leadership Recommendations:

EDITORIAL/OPINION CONTENT

- Editorials/opinion provide leadership through responsible comment on a wide range of subjects. Issues include at least one editorial based on a timely important topic covered elsewhere in the publication.
- Editorials reflect thorough research and suggest, when possible, solutions.
- Opinion coverage provides useful forums for letters to the editor, guest articles, columns, news analysis, editorial cartoons and photographs.
- A published editorial policy encourages readers to write letters and contribute guest articles and explains how to do so.
- The publication presents reviews of films, records, literature and electronic media of interest to students.

Editorial/Opinion Strengths:

Editorial/Opinion Recommendations:

LEADERSHIP, cont.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND ETHICS

- Students follow ethical practices, accept professional standards and adhere to press law in all aspects of work.
- Students use accepted journalistic forms and style. Any deviation is made because it is appropriate and valuable to readers.
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are covered. Accuracy is stressed.
- The newspaper reflects maturity and responsibility and is a leader in the development of student discussion and opinion.
- The publication is professional and journalistic in its approach to coverage, writing and leadership.

Professional Standards and Ethics Strengths:

Professional Standards and Ethics Recommendations:

Score for Leadership

0	60	70	80	100
Needs improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent

Judges: The numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 100.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Judge's Signature _____

Type name if completing evaluation electronically.

Thank you for evaluating student media for the Kettle Moraine Press Association!