

## 7.1a Critiquing the Paper

Know what is good and what needs to be improved in the next issue.

- One of the most painful, yet most helpful, things to a student newspaper staff is a post newspaper critique during which each page is analyzed and thoroughly evaluated by members of the writing and production staffs.



- Using a critique form or rubric, staff members should evaluate each page.
- The critique will reveal areas where the process broke down during production so that the staff can take steps to correct those problems before the next issue.

## 7:1b Critiquing the Paper

- The staff should make note of:
  - Leads that worked especially well, and those that fell short of expectations.
  - Headlines
    - Did they reflect the story's content?
    - Was repetition of key words avoided?
    - Was a variety of headline styles used?
  - Layouts that were especially good, and those that fell short of expectations.
    - Was modular layout used throughout?
    - Was a consistent internal margin of one pica used?
    - Was there at least one dominant element on each spread?
  - Story structure that worked well, and story structure that fell short of expectations.
    - Did each story begin with an interest-arousing lead?
    - Were quotes and transitions used effectively?
    - Did the story end appropriately? (No cheerleader statements or opinion)

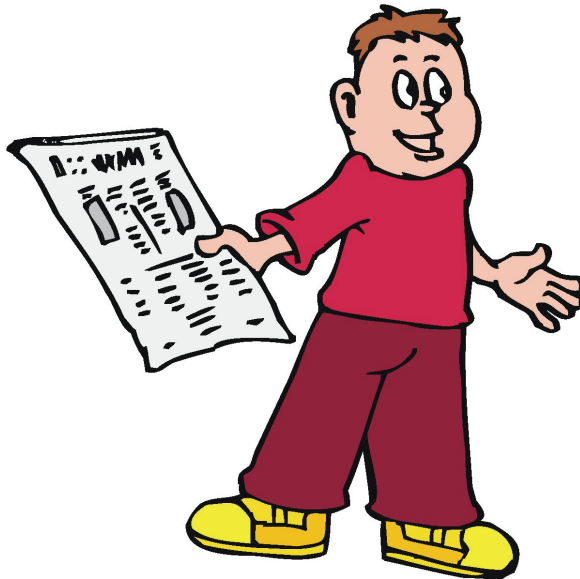
## 7:1c Critiquing the Paper

- The appropriateness and number of sources used for each story.
  - Were the sources appropriate for the story?
  - Were there enough sources?
  - Was there a variety of sources?
  - Were all grade levels included?
- The number and types of photographs used.
  - Were photos appropriate?
  - Was the best photo chosen to be the dominant one on a spread?
  - Were there full captions for each action shot?



## 7:1d Critiquing the Paper

- General reader reaction to the issue.
  - Were comments generally positive?
  - If there was negative reaction to anything, is it legitimate? How can the staff make the situation better?



- The use of pull quotes, sidebars and other graphical elements.
  - Were they used appropriately?
  - Did sidebars contain real information or were they placed to take up space?
  - Did pull quotes add anything to the look of the story package, or were they used to take up space?

## 7:1e Critiquing the Paper

- Overall content of the issue
  - Was there a variety of stories?
  - Was general campus news covered as well as items of student interest?
  - Were all stories localized?
  - Were all cultural and ethnic groups represented in stories?
  
- The critique needs to be an honest look at the newspaper. Successes should be praised, and shortcomings need to be addressed. Each staff member should recognize the importance of this part of the process and participate honestly.
  
- A conscious effort should be made by staffers to address any issues which they feel do not meet expectations in the current issue so that subsequent issues will be better.

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