

Yearbook photos capture the moment, but the words record the event. Yearbook copy documents the people, the places, the emotions and the stories of the year. Well-written yearbook copy recounts a meaningful and captivating story five or 55 years after the event occurred.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF COPY?

- Headlines hook and entice the reader.
- Sub-headlines provide an intro to the story.
- Captions identify the people and action taking place in a photo.
- Body copy recreates the event for the reader.
- Sidebars provide secondary coverage and often include quotes or infographics.

*Pro Tip:* Copy is more than words on a page, it is an element of design. Work with the designer and photographer to tell the best story possible.

## AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE:

- **Vagueness.** Instead of words like “some,” “many” or “few,” use exact numbers whenever possible. Refrain from making generalizations or obvious statements that apply every year, such as “Homecoming is a time for reflection.”
- **Editorializing.** The yearbook writer’s aim is to capture the stories of the year with accuracy and objectivity. Even phrases such as “tried their hardest,” and “gave it their all” contain editorializing.
- **Redundancy.** Eliminate the words “this year” from your copy unless they are necessary for comparison. Do not use the name of your school unless it is needed; it is obvious which school you are writing about.
- **Favoritism.** Don’t take the easy way out by interviewing your friends. Seek a variety of sources. From the third string quarterback to the star athlete, everyone has a story to tell. Go find it.

Visit [picabooyearbooks.com/tutorial](http://picabooyearbooks.com/tutorial) for more yearbook tips and resources.

## MAKE IT COUNT.

- **Use the 5 W’s and H** of journalistic writing (who, what, when, where, why and how). Write in the past tense and use the active voice.
- **Follow AP Style** for grammar and punctuation.
- **Be specific.** Since a yearbook is preserving the year’s history, its copy should be as detailed as possible. Include the date when describing an event. Focus on facts and figures. Songs played at dances, scores from sporting events, exact dollars raised or donated and cost of various items are all details worth mentioning since they offer insight into how the year differs from years past and help ignite memories when readers are reminded later of these specifics.
- **Interviews are integral to any news story.** They provide background information that brings to life the emotions of an event. A variety of sources and noteworthy details add credibility. Conduct interviews before, during and after the event.
- **Include meaningful quotes.** Ask interesting questions to get interesting answers. A direct quote should offer readers a new perspective or piece of information rather than repeat from the body copy.

## SAY IT WITH SIDEBARS

Yearbook copy doesn’t all have to be in story form. Consider using infographics, pull-quotes, lists and other bursts of interesting tidbits that can be brought alive with graphics. Look to magazines like ESPN, Men’s Health, Real Simple and Martha Stewart Living for ideas.

**JAMAL CRAWFORD**  
The 2006-07 season may not only mark the 50th anniversary of Wake Forest's first basketball game, but it's also the 50th anniversary of the school's first African-American player. Jamal Crawford, a senior guard, is the first African-American player to start in the school's history.

**Three facts about Sophomore Voleyking**

- 1 "I hate carrots. Ew!"
- 2 "I want to be a teacher when I grow up."
- 3 "Dance is my favorite after school activity."

**DATES THAT CHANGED WAKE FOREST**

- 1834: Wake Forest opens as a school for young men.
- 1899: Begins after being closed nearly five years during the Civil War.
- 1894: First Wake Forest football game.
- 1920s: William Lewis Futrell inspires the "Renaissance of Revolution."
- 1922: College moves from Wake Forest to Winston-Salem.
- 1942: Women are admitted.
- 1962: The student body integrates; Edward Reynolds is the first African-American student.
- 1969: Last mandatory chapel.
- 1971: 50th anniversary of the school's founding.
- 1996: First student abroad residential program begins at Casa Artich in Venice.
- 2000: Second presidential debate: Al Gore and George W. Bush.

## Materials needed:

\* A few sample articles gathered from local newspapers, yearbooks, magazines, online news sites and other publications.

## Overview and Purpose:

Students will be able to identify types of leads and news article types. Once identified, they will practice writing their own. Make sure to watch PYBU Season 2 | Episode 4: [vimeo.com/showcase/5445411](https://vimeo.com/showcase/5445411)

1

Introduction: Have students view the webinar, “Copywriting and Headline Treatments”. Take notes to answer the questions and discuss.

2

Review the answers to the webinar worksheet, “Copywriting: Handout”.

3

Split students into groups of 3-4 and distribute the sample articles among them. Then have the group determine:

A. The type of lead.

B. Any questions the lead may NOT have answered.

C. Story type (Explain answer!)

D. Would the story be as effective written in the other style? Why or why not?

4

Have groups share and then discuss whether they labeled the leads and article properly.

5

Complete headline writing worksheet as small groups. Review as a large group.

6

Brainstorm feature/news story ideas for yearbooks.

7

Assign students an article to write (using the brainstormed list) in the inverted pyramid style (either in the remainder of class or for home work). Have them label the 5W’s and H in their lead and then swap with a partner to peer edit.

8

After completing a final draft of the article, have students swap articles with a partner to write a headline.

9

Have students turn in article and headline. (Use the following criteria to score the headline):

- Use of action verb
- Subject + verb + object
- Highlights important information

If you have not taught any type of copywriting/newswriting, pause here and go to any of these sites for help with teaching this:

- [schooljournalism.org](http://schooljournalism.org)
- [studentreportinglabs.org/lesson-plans](http://studentreportinglabs.org/lesson-plans)
- [jea.org](http://jea.org)
- [apstylebook.com](http://apstylebook.com)
- [owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/journalism\\_and\\_journalistic\\_writing](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing)

Visit [picabooyearbooks.com/tutorial](http://picabooyearbooks.com/tutorial) for more yearbook tips and resources.

**Directions:** View the “Back to Basics (Part 2) Copywriting and Headline Treatments” and take notes to answer the questions. Discuss the answers with your class (PYBU Season 2 | Episode 4: [vimeo.com/showcase/5445411](https://vimeo.com/showcase/5445411)).

1. What is a Lead?

2. What 6 questions does a summary lead answer?

3. Define:

Narrative lead:

Descriptive lead:

Figurative language lead:

4. Draw and label the inverted pyramid:

5. Define the L - Q - T - Q story type:

6. What is the formula for headline writing?

7. In what tense are headlines written?

8. Change this into a headline: **Back to the Start**