

Words and Writing

Mod 7, Part 12

Caption Writing

Student's Name: _____

Each year when schools are planning coverage and how to best write a story, there are always yearbook staffs who say, "Why do we write body copy? No one reads it." While it may be true that not everyone reads it immediately, people will read it when they are reminiscing or before a reunion and if it is interesting.

However, you cannot use that same defense against caption writing. Photos are the largest, most-seen graphics in the yearbook. If the photo has stopped the reader, he will read the caption to know the story.

Captions are small bits of information given to the reader in digestible chunks. They tell the reader all the information they need to know about the photo. To make it more personal, they can include a quote from someone in the photo.

Writing captions is as easy as **ABCD**.

A: An attention getter is like a mini headline. It is a direct link from the caption to the photo it is describing.

B: Basic information is a present-tense sentence telling who is in the photo (name up to seven people) and what he or they are doing.

C: Complimentary information is a past-tense sentence telling the reader something he cannot see from the photo itself, like how much money was raised in the fundraiser or who won the game.

D: A Direct quote should be a unique quote from someone in the photo discussing an aspect of the event in the photo. This should not be a fact. Get quotable quotes. How did the person FEEL?

Things to remember when writing captions

- Lead-in states the obvious in an unobvious way
- Include the five Ws and H
- Use a variety of adjectives and adverbs
- Be descriptive
- Use strong, visual specific nouns
- Consider the action before and during the photo and reaction to the event
- Use colorful, lively, visual action verbs
- Write in present tense, active voice (unless changing tenses to make it logical)
- Be factual
- Use a variety of sentence patterns
- Identify all people in picture (up to seven)
- Use complete sentences
- Use first and last names



Taking Aim. On March 5 at the state championship in Raleigh, Senior Monica Miller scores the winning goal against Ravenscroft Academy. It was her night as she notched six goals during the game and 43 for her final year. According to Miller, “When you are passionate, you always have your destination in sight and are not distracted by obstacles.”

All captions need to explain the who, what, when, where, why and how to put the reader in the moment the photo was taken. In this case, think about the information for a reader who does not know the game of water polo. A quote about what the player was thinking would be a nice touch as the last sentence.

A: Attention Getter **Taking Aim.**

B: Basic Information On March 5 at the state championship in Raleigh, Senior Monica Miller scores the winning goal against Ravenscroft Academy.

C: Complimentary It was her night as she notched six goals during the game and 43 for her final year.

D: Direct quote “When you are passionate, you always have your destination in sight and are not distracted by obstacles.”

Assignment: In this exercise, we are going to work on writing captions. At times, it is hard to include all four parts in a caption. Still, you should always include at least two and hopefully three of the four parts of a caption. Try to include all four parts of the **ABCD**.



Information:

- Junior Emily Daly and junior Daniella Lyons (Daniella is in the front).
- Performing during the halftime show of the game against Benson High School on Oct. 12.
- The band is called the Marching Lion Pride.
- Their music for this season's show features songs from the movie Jekyll and Hyde.
- The football team lost the game, 21-10.
- The band won first place in the Mid-America Marching Festival the next day.
- The color guard moms designed and sewed these flags for the group.
- "I just love this show. It is the most difficult show we have performed since I joined the band two years ago and we do it so well." — Daniella Lyons
- "We put in a lot of hours of practice to perfect these routines and then four games later the season ends, and you are done." — Emily Daly
- "You'd be surprised how heavy these flags are. It's almost as good a workout as lifting weights." — senior Francine Dowell

Caption Writing: Attention Getter (few words) > Basic Information (present tense) > Complimentary Information (past tense) > Direct Quote



Information:

- Senior Lovell Jones (in the front).
- From left to right: Senior Devon Wiley, Senior Jeremiah Jones, Senior Grant Trimbell, Senior Aaron Messick, Senior Caleb Entsminger, Senior Jethro Gibbs.
- Jones broke his leg on the first day of football practice this season.
- The senior skit was performed as a part of the annual Bonfire.
- Event is scheduled before the first football game each year.
- Lovell Jones is dancing to “Stanky Legg.”
- Due to the drought and the heat, there was no actual bonfire this year.
- The event was held in the air-conditioned gymnasium.
- The first game of the season was played the next night.
- For the first time in school history, the freshmen beat the seniors in the skit competition.
- “When I was out there dancing, I just kinda forgot that my leg was hurting. I guess I was just all in the moment, lovin’ that the spotlight was on me and that my boys were out there cheering me on.” — Lovell Jones
- “Lovell wasn’t even supposed to be out there in front and all of the sudden there he was, and the crowd was loving it. Can’t believe we didn’t win. I’m blamin’ it all on Lovell.”
 - Jeremiah Jones

Caption Writing: Attention Getter (few words) > Basic Information (present tense) > Complimentary Information (past tense) > Direct Quote
