



ALL-KANSAS

VIDEO NEWS CRITIQUE BOOKLET

This guide is designed to be an educational device to improve the quality of your video news program. It is intended to point out positive aspects of your program as well as to point out possible deficiencies.

Judging comments are designed as suggestions for improvement. Keep in mind that these comments represent just one individual's opinion. A judge's comments may not apply to all school situations. Please understand that it would be impossible for your judge to be aware of the specifics of each school. However, comments should represent current trends in video journalism.

Each of the sections contained in this guide book has an overall evaluation where the judge must rate the section according to an overall set of criteria. The final evaluation is based on an total of the five section evaluations. Each criteria calls for a specific ranking with a (+) for strong work in the area; a (✓) for being adequate and a (-) for needing improvement.

An overall open-comment critique space is included on pages 7 & 8 of this document.

SCHOOL NAME:

VIDEO PROGRAM NAME:

YEAR:

ADVISER:



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COVERAGE & CONTENT

Coverage Overall Comments:

- + ✓ - Does the program include a variety of news stories, including features, breaking news, issues and newsworthy profiles?
- + ✓ - Are the stories relevant to the primary audience, whether it's just the student body and faculty of the school, or whether it extends to the greater community and beyond via cable and/or the web?
- + ✓ - Are the day-to-day lives of students reflected in the stories?
- + ✓ - Do stories cover timely issues of interest to student viewers and others?
- + ✓ - Does news coverage take precedent over features and sports, unless it's appropriate for it not to?
- + ✓ - Do reporters place an emphasis on the "why" and "how" of stories?
- + ✓ - Are feature stories varied to include both school-sponsored and non-school activities?
- + ✓ - Does sports coverage include a mix of breaking news and features?
- + ✓ - Do both sports and features include a mix of issue stories and profiles?
- + ✓ - Is the subject matter significant and appropriate for the time allotted?

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION

All-Kansas Coverage:

Coverage is complete and thorough, and it helps tell the story of the school, primarily its students, but also the faculty and surrounding community.

Award of Commendation Coverage:

Coverage is generally complete and adequately serves a broad viewership, but it may not fully take advantage of its forum to inform its audience of key stories and issues.

Award of Merit Coverage:

Coverage tends to be somewhat shallow, and the staff needs to place more emphasis on providing news of use to its viewers.



WRITING & EDITING

- + ✓ - Do stories have strong opens that entice viewers?
- + ✓ - Are scripts written in active voice, emphasizing simple sentences with only one thought per sentence?
- + ✓ - Are transitions effective? Do they make the object of the previous sentence the subject of the next sentence or vice versa?
- + ✓ - Do writers effectively use devices like repetition of key words to help readers understand?
- + ✓ - Do writers write to the video, using "hit-and-run" writing to remind viewers of the relationship of the words to the pictures? Do writers then "run" from the video by providing additional information in the script?
- + ✓ - Do scripts exhibit the hallmarks of grammatical writing that follows Associated Press broadcast style?
- + ✓ - In VOs, do writers still remember to attribute information to a source?
- + ✓ - In VO/SOTs, do writers properly balance VOs with sound bites, not relying on sound bites to tell the entire story?
- + ✓ - Are sound bites effective and revealing of the subject or the issue at hand?
- + ✓ - Do stories have strong "closes" that effectively summarize the story and remind viewers of the important points in the stories? Do the closes avoid stating the reporters' opinions?

a bit about how video news writing differs from print writing, but there are still a few stories that don't follow good video news writing standards.

Award of Merit Writing & Editing:

Writing and editing show little or no understanding that video news writing differs from print writing. Staff needs to work much harder on editing stories so they are more accessible to viewers.

Writing & Editing Overall Comments:

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION

All-Kansas Writing & Editing:

The staff understands that writing video news is different than writing for print media, and stories are crisply told and feature all the hallmarks of good video news presentation.

Award of Commendation Writing & Editing:

Writing and editing show that the staff understands



ON-AIR PERFORMANCE & CONTINUITY

- + ✓ - Does the show have an effective open that clearly brands the program as something of value to the primary audiences?
- + ✓ - Does the staff report on important news, sports and features from program to program in a consistent manner?
- + ✓ - Is there continuity also from story to story in the manner it's introduced and presented by anchors and reporters?
- + ✓ - Are more important stories given more time and prominent placement in the run-down than less important stories?
- + ✓ - Is there continuity within a story (meaning stories flow smoothly, pictures and words match, and all stories have beginnings, middles and ends)?
- + ✓ - Are stories balanced, with all credible sides presented? Are stories objective in their choice of words and pictures?
- + ✓ - Are anchors confident and do they appear natural in front of the camera?
- + ✓ - Are reporters confident and do they appear natural in front of the camera?
- + ✓ - Does all "talent" speak in a concise, clear, authoritative manner and at a proper pace so that the audience can understand what is being said?
- + ✓ - In the event of interviews, is there a proper balance between shots of the interviewer and the interviewee? Are questions fair and easy to understand?

Award of Commendation Performance & Continuity:

Staff only occasionally uses the intimacy of video news to inform readers about important news in an engaging manner. The staff's commitment to consistency sometimes seems missing.

Award of Merit Performance & Continuity:

Staff rarely, if ever, uses the intimacy of video news to inform readers about important news in a timely and accurate fashion. Continuity from show to show and from story to story is lacking.

Performance & Continuity Overall Comments:

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION

All-Kansas On-Air Performance & Continuity:

Staff uses the intimacy of video news to establish a rapport with its viewers and to present information in an engaging manner. The staff also practices a commitment to consistency from story to story and from show to show.



PHOTOGRAPHY

- + ✓ - Are all shots steady and is it clear that photographers (almost always) used tripods to capture images?
- + ✓ - Are shots in focus and properly white-balanced?
- + ✓ - Is there proper contrast in all shots, and are subjects properly lit?
- + ✓ - Do photographers capture compelling establishing shots that immediately capture the viewer's attention?
- + ✓ - Do photographers use a variety of shots (close-ups, medium and wide shots) to provide different perspectives for the audience?
- + ✓ - Do photographers limit gimmick shots like zooms and pans, and if they do use them, do they do them effectively?
- + ✓ - Do photographers effectively use the rule-of-thirds to create a center of visual interest for their subjects?
- + ✓ - In shooting sports, do photographers capture the event's pivotal moments?
- + ✓ - Are shots edited to avoid jump-cuts in the story?
- + ✓ - When editing, do photographers allow shots to remain on screen for the proper amount of time: long enough for viewers to understand, but not so long that they become bored?

ages that are in focus, lit properly or that capture pivotal moments. Work and instruction is needed in these areas.

Photography Overall Comments:

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION

All-Kansas Design:

Staff photographers consistently capture compelling images that are also technically sound and edited crisply to tell great stories.

Award of Commendation Design:

Photographers generally capture compelling images that are also technically sound and edited crisply to tell great stories, but the quality suffers occasionally in some stories.

Award of Merit Design:

Photographers regularly have trouble capturing im-



TECHNICAL QUALITY

Leadership Overall Comments:

- + ✓ - Does the staff take advantage of a studio to provide a "home" for the show, even if the show goes "on location" for a show?
- + ✓ - Is the studio setKup, no matter how rudimentary, appropriate to the tone and quality of the show?
- + ✓ - Does studio lighting provide proper contrast, accurate color reproduction and proper exposure?
- + ✓ - Does lighting for all stories provide proper contract, accurate color reproduction and proper exposure?
- + ✓ - Does the staff take advantage of post-production to enhance the viewer's understanding of stories?
- + ✓ - Are video editing techniques consistent from one story to another?
- + ✓ - Are audio levels clear and crisp and properly balanced in the studio?
- + ✓ - Are audio levels consistent from source to source and from story to story?
- + ✓ - Are transitions from story to story appropriate and glitch free?
- + ✓ - Do graphics — both OTS graphics and lower-third graphics — enhance stories and explain significance to viewers?

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION

All-Kansas Leadership:

Staff makes full use of available technology to make its program as professional-looking and sounding as possible.

Award of Commendation Leadership:

Staff occasionally uses available technology, but doesn't always meet technical standards of most proficient scholastic journalism programs.

Award of Merit Leadership:

Staff rarely uses available technology, and rarely reaches high technical standards for video news presentation.



IN SUMMARY

COVERAGE & CONTENT

All-Kansas
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

WRITING & EDITING

All-Kansas
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

ON-AIR PERFORMANCE & CONTINUITY

All-Kansas
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

PHOTOGRAPHY

All-Kansas
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

TECHNICAL QUALITY

All-Kansas
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

FINAL EVALUATION

All-Kansas:

This is a great video news program which engages its audience and tells important stories that reflect the life of the school and its students. The program's technical quality and photography reflect the highest standards of scholastic journalism, and its reporters and anchors are committed to maintaining that professional standard.

Award of Commendation:

This is an overall good video news program. It tells important stories about its school and students, but it may occasionally lapse into the trivial. Further, its technical aspects and photography, while strong, can use some improvement in order to meet the highest standards of scholastic journalism.

Award of Merit

This is a video news program that has too many flaws to be rated at the top. It may be a new enterprise, and because of that, the staff and the adviser may just be learning about the nuances of video news presentation. Further, the program may have some strong areas, but it also has many areas that need significant improvement.

Final Evaluation Overall Comments:

Judges should use this text box for overall comments on the qualities and suggestions for improvement for the program.



Final Evaluation Overall Comments (continued)