

IAA Yearbook Expectations for Superior Work

The following provides criteria for judges when ranking IAA entries. The decision of the expert judge(s) is final.

WRITING

The lead

- Nothing should be made up, generalized or assumed. The lead should be drawn from interviews.
- Question leads almost always fail.
- Uses a feature lead that draws in the reader.
- Use description and dialogue to put the reader there.
- Focus on action verbs and specific nouns. Be wary of adverbs and too many adjectives.

The body

- Copy should be focused on people in the event, not the event itself. Look for people who are impacted by the event. Look for the unique — the story that hasn't been told.
- Quotes should drive the story.
- Paragraphs are one-to-two sentences long.
- Transitions offer meaningful facts to provide context for the subsequent quote.
- No editorial comment.
- Follow AP style – can be AP style or your staff's style. Copy needs consistency.
- Active voice is preferred over passive voice.
- Stories should be written in past tense since the events will have happened by the time the book publishes.
- Writing should be tight and concise, packed with facts.

Quotes

- Quotes should contain emotion or opinions.
- Quotes should be in their own paragraph.
- Quotes should not be stacked on top of each other.
- Quote multiple appropriate sources in the body copy.
- Try to quote subjects who aren't in the photographs on the spread to get more students in the book.
- Said says it best. Attributive verb should "said."
- The last word of a quote paragraph should not be said (or any other attributive verb. Attribution should follow the first natural break in the quote.)
- Uses the following format for writing quotes: "People who judge IAAs are experienced advisers," ILPC director Jeanne Acton said. "They are dedicated to their professions and to the students who are here to learn."

- Be consistent with second reference. Staffs can choose either last name, courtesy titles or first names, but the choice must be consistent throughout the piece.

Captions

- Caption headline: short, usually clever phrase that makes an obvious link to the photograph.
- Sentence 1: Names people visible in the photo and describes what they're doing without being too obvious.
- Sentence 2: Adds meaning through contextual information not obvious in the photo. At best, it adds "the rest of the story."
- Sentence 3: Meaningful quote in the aforementioned format.
- Participles and names or class designation are weak ways to begin a caption.

Headlines

- Primary head: clever and accurate.
- Secondary head: Adds meaningful, specific information about the content of the spread.
- Words should not be repeated in any part of the headline.
- Prepositional phrases, verb phrases – any phrase should not be split between lines.
- Secondary heads should avoid beginning with grade classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, faculty member).
- Consistently use up style or sentence style.
- Avoid clichés.

DESIGN

- Great design has contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity.
- White space should not be trapped, creating unplanned white space.
- White space should be used to separate, unify or frame.
- Facing pages are designed as one unit.
- Spread should have consistent inner-spacing.
- The dominant photo should command attention in both size and content. The dominant photo should be the best photo on the spread.
- Photos are cropped to the center of interest and not forced into pre-designed layouts.
- Captions should touch the photos they describe OR cluster captions should be easy to match to the photos they describe. No more than four captions in a cluster.
- Spot color is used to link the spread together. Use spot color with restraint.
- Nothing decorates. Every element serves a purpose.
- Spreads may have one topic or be designed with multiple modules.
- Headline and copy should be presented as a unit.
- Visual hierarchy.
- Typography adds to design without distracting.
- No more than three typefaces used, preferably two. Members of the same typeface family count as one.

- If type is used on a photograph, it does not interfere with the composition of the photograph and is easy to read.
- The design should showcase the content: writing and photography.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Elements of photocomposition are clearly evident (unique angle, isolation, rule of thirds, framing, repetition, leading lines, etc.).
- Photos should be cropped to the center of interest eliminating distracting or unnecessary elements.
- Storytelling moments captured. Candid photos.
- Color balanced and correct exposure.
- Main subject is in sharp focus.
- Well-researched caption included.
- To provide visual unity, photographs should avoid facing off the page.