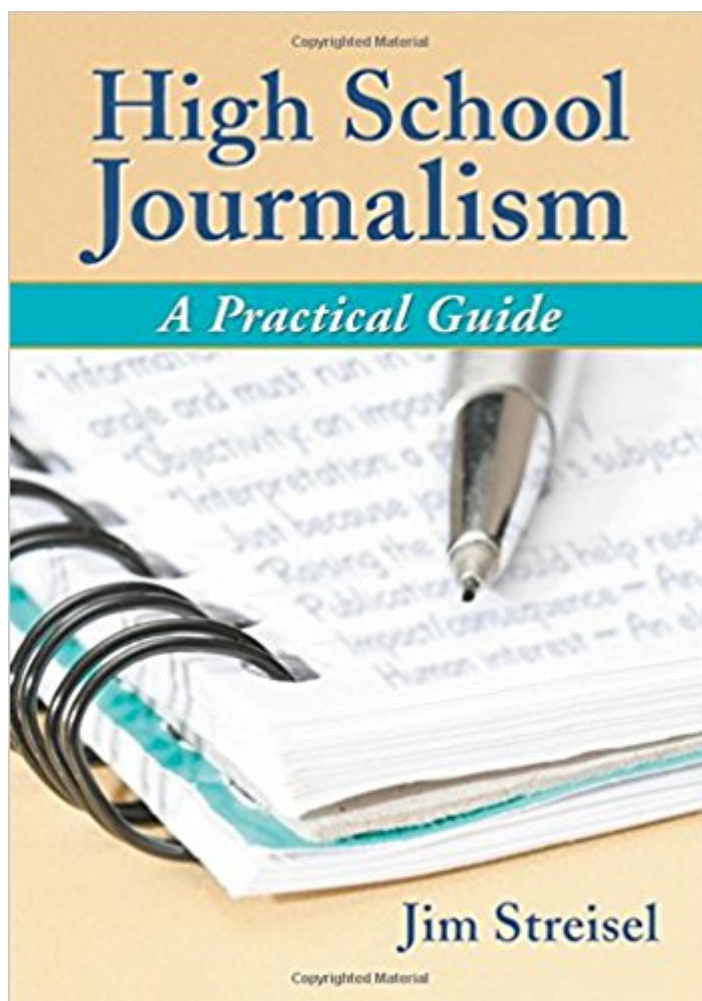


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High School Journalism: A Practical Guide



Synopsis

High school journalists share the same objectives as professional reporters--finding the story, writing the story, and packaging the story so that it appeals to an audience. Understanding how to best accomplish these objectives is key to the student on the newspaper, yearbook or Web site staff, but the fundamental art of storytelling and story presentation are not always at the center of high school journalism classes. Student journalists must first understand that storytelling, at its most basic level, is about people, and that understanding the audience is essential in deciding how to present the story. This handbook for high school journalists and teachers offers practical tips for all elements of school journalism. The author covers the essential components that students must understand: information gathering, writing, standard and alternative coverage and packaging. Students will find valuable information about identifying news, interviewing, research, narrative writing style, editing, visual presentation and layout. The book also covers the legal rights of student journalists, objective vs. opinion writing, staff planning and organization and Web-based journalism. Each chapter includes study guides for practical applications of the concepts discussed.

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"Most valuable." --Arba
"Recommended." --Library Media Connection
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Jim Streisel is the HiLite newspaper and website adviser and communications teacher at Carmel High School in Carmel, Indiana. He lives in Noblesville, Indiana.

Having taught high school journalism and advised an award-winning publication for 12 years, I think this is my favorite of the many all-purpose texts that are out there. Is it the most comprehensive? No. Far from it. That doesn't matter to me. Most intro courses are going to be geared toward freshmen and sophomores and this book is perfect for that group. It breaks journalism down effectively for younger students and does a nice job giving them a vocabulary they can both understand and use. From "broccoli" to "gold coins," key concepts are presented in a way that sticks well with high school students--and not just the highest level kids. Throughout, Streisel writes in a lively, approachable voice. If it is less formal and scholarly than in some textbooks, this doesn't come at the expense of dumbing down the material. I find the book to be just as effective with my senior editors as it is with freshmen who may or may not have a serious interest in journalism and that's no small feat. Bonus kudos for the many excellent examples and for chapters on design and law that are short enough to be approachable for basic-level students yet comprehensive enough to use with veterans on a publication staff. Downsides? Yeah, there are some. I think the book is a little pricey for its size (although, to be fair, it does retail for about half the price of larger, hardbound texts). Also, in places, it could be a little more visually appealing. Overall though, these are minor quibbles and this is, for the most part just what it claims to be--a very PRACTICAL guide for students and teachers alike.

I am beginning a stint as a high school newspaper adviser and purchased several of the titles on the market. This book seems geared to junior high or elementary school students; I think older kids would find the explanations and language condescending and simplistic. A chapter on interviewing begins with a story about how the author's college friend got all the girls because he was a good listener. According to this text, good stories are like pepperonis on a pizza. A discussion of "What is news?" begins with a page on who likes broccoli and who doesn't. These explanatory analogies get tiresome immediately. There is nothing per se wrong about the information presented, but the pitch underestimates the intelligence of high school students.

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