THE DISPATCH
James Bowie High School

Staff Manual
2025-2026
(updated 11/25)

Mission Statement

• The Dispatch is the official student newspaper of James Bowie High School. 3500 copies are published and distributed for free six times a year, generally once per six weeks for the school's students, staff and community.
• The Dispatch is an open forum for student expression. The Dispatch is not reviewed by school administration prior to distribution, and the adviser will not act as a censor. Content represents the views of the student staff and not school or district officials.
• The Dispatch works to avoid bias and/or favoritism. We strive to make our coverage and content meaningful, timely, and interesting to our readers. Our articles reflect our genuine objective of reporting news and will be held to a high standard of quality.
• We make every effort to avoid printing libel, obscenities, innuendo and material that threatens to disrupt the learning process or is an invasion of privacy. We avoid electronic manipulation that alters the truth of a photograph without indicating that the photograph is an illustration.
• Staff editorials represent the opinion of the editorial board arrived at by discussion and will not be bylined. Bylined articles are the opinion of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Dispatch staff or administration as a whole.
• The Dispatch welcomes reader input. Please send any letters, articles, comments or corrections to bowie.journalism@gmail.com, call (512) 841-4184, mail them to 4103 W. Slaughter Lane, Austin, TX 78749 or drop them off in room F-214 with adviser Michael Reeves or any editor. Letters must be signed, and emailed letters will require verification before publication. We will not necessarily publish all letters received and reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

PRIDE IN PUBLISHING

www.thedispatchonline.net
James Bowie High School
4103 W. Slaughter Lane
Austin TX, 78749

CURRENT STAFF AWARDS

- **NSPA Print Pacemaker Finalist, 2024-25**
- **NSPA Print All-American, 4 Marks/Distinction, 2024-25**
- **JEA/NSPA Print 2nd Place Best in Show, Fall National Convention Philadelphia, 2023-24**
- **CSPA Hybrid Gold Crown, 3/3 All-Columbian, 2024-25**
- **SNO Distinguished Website 2024-25**
- **SIPA Print All-Southern, 2024-25**
- **SIPA Online Scroggins 'Best of the South', 2024-25**
- **UIL/ILPC Print Gold Star, 2024-25**
- **UIL/ILPC Online Gold Star, 2024-25**
- **TAJE Fall Fiesta First Place Best in Show, 2022-23**

THE DISPATCH STAFF, 2022-2023

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Subjective
Executive Editor
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Entertainment Editors
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Commentary Editor
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Photo Essay Co-Editors
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Sara Fowler
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Casey McAuley
Chelsea Rodgers
Brianna Saucedo
Sophia Shaw
Zoe Stover
Eva Sweeney
Reese Walker
Madeline Whitten
Eliza Williams
Ben Wong
Cole Wong

4 Print Deadlines

Issue #1 - pub date 9/26
Story draft deadline: Fri. Sept. 12
Story final deadline: Wed. Sept. 17
Saturday Workday Sat. Sept. 20
Pages complete deadline: Mon. Sept. 21
Final work day: Tue. Sept. 22
Send pages to printer: Wed. Sept. 23
Distribute to campus: Friday, Sept. 26

Issue #2 - pub date 11/7
Story draft deadline: Fri. Oct. 24
Story final deadline: Wed. Oct. 29
Saturday Workday Sat. Nov. 1
Pages complete deadline: Mon. Nov. 4
Final work day: Tue. Nov. 5
Send pages to printer: Wed. Nov. 4
Distribute to campus: Friday, Nov. 7

Issue #3 - pub date 12/8
Story draft deadline: Fri. Nov. 21
Story final deadline: Tue. Dec. 2
Saturday Workday: Sat. Dec. 6
Pages complete deadline: Mon. Dec. 8
Final work day: Tue. Dec. 9
Send pages to printer: Wed. Dec. 10
Distribute to campus: Friday Dec. 12

Issue #4 - pub date 2/13
Story draft deadline: Fri. Jan. 30
Story final deadline: Wed. Feb. 4
Saturday Workday: Sat. Feb. 7
Pages complete ddl: Mon. Feb. 9
Final work day: Tue. Feb. 10
Send pages to printer: Wed. Feb. 11
Distribute to campus: Friday, Feb. 13

Issue #5 - pub date 4/10
Story draft deadline: Fri. May 27
Story final deadline: Wed. April 1
Saturday Workday: Sat. April 4
Pages complete deadline: Mon. April 6
Final work day: Tue. April 7
Send pages to printer: Wed. April 8
Distribute to campus: Friday, April 10

Issue #6 - pub date 5/15
Story draft deadline: Fri. May 1
Story final deadline: Wed. May 6
Saturday Workday: Sat. May 9
Pages deadline: Mon. May 11
Final work day: Tue. May 12
Send pages to printer: Wed. May 13
Distribute to campus: Friday, May 15

Plan your calendar with the above dates

- Don't be absent during the critical weeks
- Show advertisers the print dates
- Plan your time according to these dates
- Balance your personal life with your journalism life

1. I agree to meet any and all deadlines assigned to me for writing, photography, layouts, and art. I understand missed deadlines may result in a change in staff position and/or a grade that reflects my efforts for the six weeks.

2. I agree to work after school, evenings, and weekends to complete journalism responsibilities assigned to me.

3. I agree to learn and adhere to ethical journalism standards in my reporting in areas of libel, obscenity, disruption of school program, and copyright.

4. I will refrain from malicious, damaging words or behavior towards anyone, especially Dispatch staff, but also including JBHS students and adult staff.

5. I will use my cell phone, social media, and other websites for Dispatch business while in Rm. F203.

6. I agree to follow equipment check out procedures, to complete the camera agreement, and ensure return and sensible care of the equipment.

7. I agree to pay for the repair and replacement of any Dispatch equipment damaged at school or off-campus from my actions. This item includes, but is not limited to, computer and camera equipment.

8. I will preserve my privilege to leave Rm. F203 for Dispatch business (without supervision).

9. I will maintain a C or better average in all my core classes and will not let journalism supplant my academic responsibilities.

The Bottom Line

Act professionally at all times as a Dispatch staff member.

By doing this you are protecting...

1. Our reputation as a staff with readers, adults, and advertisers.

2. Your own reputation.

3. Our campus privileges.

4. Your campus privileges.

5. Your job on staff.

And most importantly

6. Yours and everyone else's happiness.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, & to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

RULED:

Students do not shed their constitutional rights "at the school house gate."

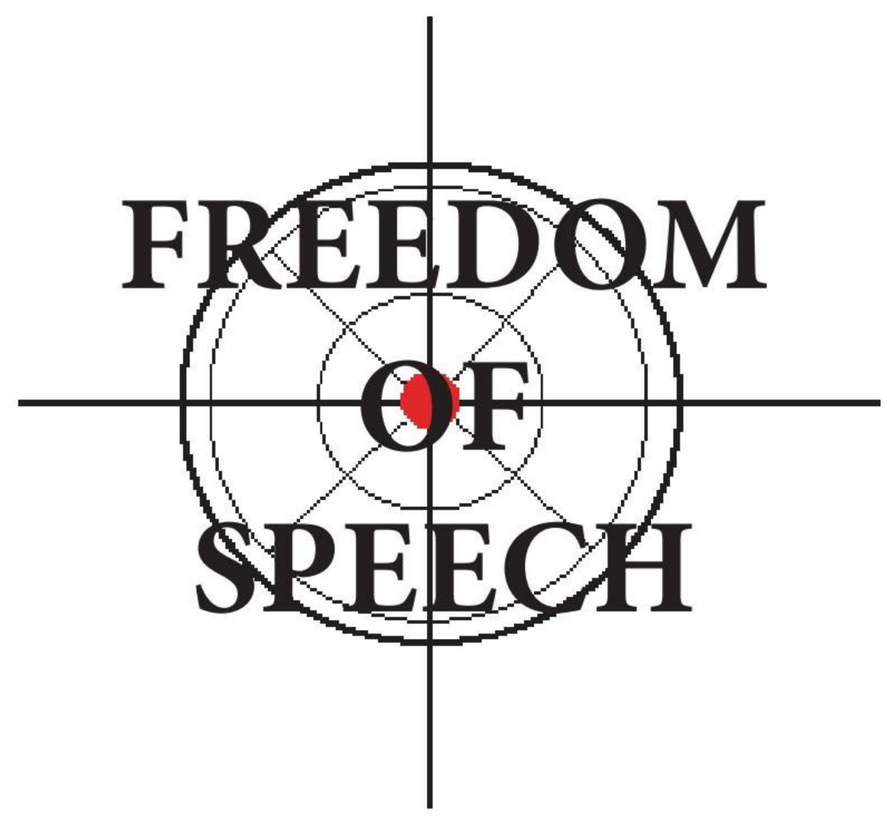
Hands graphic Creator: TonTonic Credit: Depositphotos. Used with permission
Key graphic made by Cianna Chariez. Used with permission

The Tinker Case

Tinker vs. Des Moines (1968)

High school journalism scored its most historical legal victory when the 1968 Supreme Court wrote the above opinion, which establishes that adults cannot strip students of unalienable rights such as their First Amendment free speech.

Specifically, Mary Beth and John Tinker sued their Iowa high school when it suspended them for expressing their opinion with armbands about the Vietnam War.



Freedom of Speech made by Kamryn Bryce. Used with permission

In the real, copyrighted world, it is NOT acceptable/legal to copy-paste graphics from internet into your work

Publishing a photo/graphic copy-pasted from the internet without permission violates copyright- even when we state the URL.

COPYRIGHT RULES

Bowie can use the photo/graphic when:

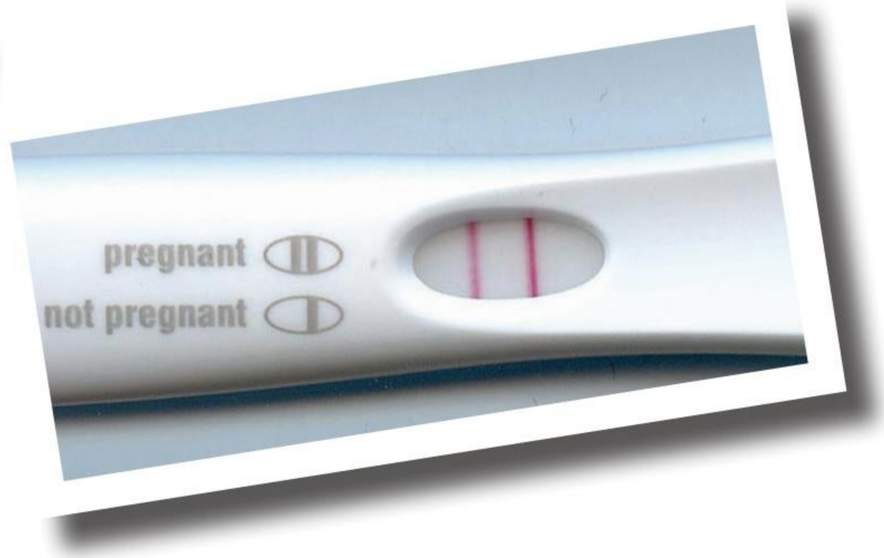
1. We took the pic ourselves

2. We designed the graphic ourselves

3. We received permission because we asked the owner

4. We used a Creative Common approved license

5. We faithfully credited photographers



Photos from Creative Commons

EXAMPLE: **You're doing 2 stories on:**
(1) A story on Ellen.
(2) Over-the-counter pregnancy tests

YES to any of these:

1. Shoot a photo yourself of the P-Test on a Walmart shelf
2. Order a sketch from a cartoonist
3. Create a photo-illustration that collages MANY graphics and photos
4. Search Google for a rights-approved Ellen photo
5. Use web info to contact the owner of the photo and request permission to use the photo in our HS pub

NO to all of these:

1. Copy-paste a photo of pregnancy test/ Ellen from internet and write the URL below it
2. Skip any photo/graphic because it's too much extra work to get one- then Bowie excellence suffers
3. Use clip-art as decoration

GETTING PERMISSION is easy

Write an email to the source, stating who we are, what we are using the photo for, and when it will run. If you gain permission, write the author's name and "Photo courtesy of" in the photo credit.

Libel and Slander

You must understand libel principles since libel is probably the most dangerous mess your writing can create. Dispatch has printed a libelous fact if the sentence is:

1) Untrue
2) Malicious intent
3) Reflects reckless reporting

Court have ruled in favor of libel claims when two or more of the above conditions have been met.

Case studies: Are these libelous?

1. Student newspaper prints headline + story:

Police Nab Drug Dealer

"In a sweep across campus yesterday, police arrested several students, charging them with dealing drugs. Arrested were Bill Jones, sophomore and a student from community college, John Renshaw."

2. The Dispatch prints headlines + story:

JBHS shocked by suicide

"Junior Amanda Cota ended her own life Mar. 8, 2009 at approximately 3 p.m. It was revealed that Cota shot herself while wearing her prom dress and holding notes pertaining to a recent relationship."

Libel:

Your First Amendment freedom of speech as a writer becomes unprotected when you cross the libel line.

Yes, Dispatch can be sued in a court of law for libel printed on our pages.

The best defense when a reporter is accused of libel and/ or untrue printed material?

- A printed retraction.

What are some things reporters can do in advance to protect themselves?

- Take meticulous notes
- Record interviews and save them carefully.

Answers:
1. Yes 2. Yes

We enter contests that scrutinize our copyright and libel control and downgrade for violations.

Start of Issue

Block 1 - Start brainstorming individually. Editors review previous issue with EiCs and Reeves
Block 2 - Brainstorm day - full staff
Block 3 - Assignment day - full staff
Block 4 - Page Editor complete SNO FLOW and paper dummy pages
Staff Reporters brainstorm story questions/sources - on googledocs
Block 5 - Page Editors - pre-layout InDesign page
Staff Reporters create googledoc for all stories
Page Editors communicate with PE and GE about needs and approx sizing
Block 6 - All writers set up interviews and begin the writing cycle - interview, dig, and research
Block 7 - All Editors guide and manage reporters
All reporters check in with Page Editors
Block 8 - All editors working on design and art elements and verify status of graphics
All writers working on googledoc stories
Block 9 - All editors working on design and art elements and verify status of graphics
All writers working on googledoc stories
Block 10 - All writers - story drafts due to Editors in googledocs
All Editors working with writers to verify story contents and format
Between Block 10 and Block 11 - All editors will edit googledoc stories and provide Reeves with an update of story status on both SNO FLOW and writing status google form
Block 11 - All writers review edits to their work, looking for suggestions and make needed revisions
All Editors begin placing elements on InDesign pages
Block 12 - Final story deadline for writers - all non-editorial staff check in with Page editors to offer additional help with either art, graphics, or additional writing needs.
Block 12 to Final page deadline - All staff works on finalizing the newspaper in all areas
Final Deadline - EIC and ME check and edit all final drafts of pages with Reeves edits. Reeves completes final .pdf files and submits them to printer.
Distribution day - all staff helps distribute the paper around campus. Upon return, reads all portions of the paper and begins the critique process on the critique form.
Between distribution and critique - all staff will remain vigilant about the newspaper, listening for comments both positive and negative from students and staff around campus.
Block immediately after distribution - All staff group critique

The Brainstorm

- Bring us awesome ideas.
- Be creative.
- Be informed.
- Brainstormed ideas for print and web must be incredible.
- They are the secret to our success.
- Eliminate stale, predictable projects printed in other publications.
- Localize your idea to JBHS.

Art from Creative Commons

The Pitch Process

1. Pitch your story or project ideas in our Brainstorm sessions. Share them outside the meeting with the EiC's.
2. Inform yourself beyond your first ideas. View inspiring publications in **ISSUU** to deepen your ideas. What are other leading papers covering from scholastic publications to professionals?
3. Love your community; What they need to know? Read, ask, think, and be creative. Bring ideas passionately. Believe in your ideas. **LOCALIZE** so that they have a connection to the story
4. Start visualizing **DESIGN & PHOTO DETAILS NOW** that will support your story pitches. Plan packaged layout, web stories, or photos. Envision the final product.
5.The Editorial Board will approve, amend, or deny proposals during lunch or a class session.

The Editorial Board is comprised of all Dispatch Editors

IO News Values

THE DISPATCH | STAFF MANUAL

The Dispatch staff and editors has to ask itself what is worthy of being printed among the many choices we face each cycle. Are we writing what people want to read? What they SHOULD read?

Develop a sense for what makes a story **newsworthy**. This is called "a nose for news."

These themes are classically WORTHwhile…

Hard News Themes

1. Conflict
Is this story a struggle between two opposing sides? Student vs. student? Admin. vs. students? A cop vs. a criminal? Political struggles?

2. Progress
Will the story cover something that has been improved or something that should be fixed?

3. Disaster
Will the story cover something that happened out of our control? Car accident? Fire? Earthquake? Death?

4. Consequence
Does this story cover an issue that affects many people or a few people very deeply? Food prices raised? Immigration issues? Student Services being cut?

Soft News Themes

5. Human interest/emotional factors
Does it pull on heartstrings? Is it "Titanic" status? Will it make us angry, happy, sad?

6. Prominence
Is the story about a popular/prominent student, teacher or celebrity? Student/teacher win an award?

7. Novelty
Something unusual? A wrestler with no legs? A girl with a walking disability in marching band?

8. Romance and relationships
Humans find interest in these topics. Did a teacher get married? Blind date is a perfect example.

9. Pop Culture
TikTok dance trend, Snapchat, language changes, new apps, the latest on the Bachelor, and other mass appeal stories are always great.

Localizing

Connect your reporting to our JBHS community to establish NEWSWORTHINESS.

For instance:

1. Compare your larger topic to a similar event locally

2. Get a local voice to comment about your topic

3. Conduct a survey showing local opinion about your topic

4. Find + interview a student who has had a similar experience

5. Find + interview a teacher or administrator for perspective

6. Always bring it back to Bowie

Photos from Creative Commons

Late stories are **evil.** Unacceptable. This isn't your math class doing textbook problems; you are making a real thing, consisting of real dollars ($2000 an issue), with real people who need written things from you by a real date.

We cannot edit your story, check facts, design with enough time - **WE CANNOT BE PROFESSIONAL** - when you do not meet your deadline.

Don't **procrastinate** during any phase of your reporting. Be productive during class. Do not squander precious minutes socializing when you know you have a deadline. This also applies to editors who must edit stories after deadlines.

Photos from Creative Commons

Lame rationalizations about deadlines

1. "The event I'm covering doesn't happen until after my deadline."

You can still conduct interviews and research your topic to show that you have investigated, learned from sources, and fact-gathered. No story is only contained in one incident. Pre-interview if you can.

2. "I haven't interviewed anyone yet, so I can't turn it in."

Although your draft may not be stellar without quotes, you can still submit the narrative/fact portions of the story and insert brackets where your quotes will be (with explanations of who they'll be coming from and why you haven't interviewed them yet.)

3. "I know I will be late on this deadline, but I don't want to admit it to anyone..."

Have courage - and a backbone! Healthy communication lets Reeves and editors know what is going on. We can see your Google Docs at all times, so we know what is going on but we don't know why. Speak up and be honest. Honesty goes a long way towards getting an extension, or more importantly, you can solicit help from others. Your editors are on your side, we want everyone to be successful.

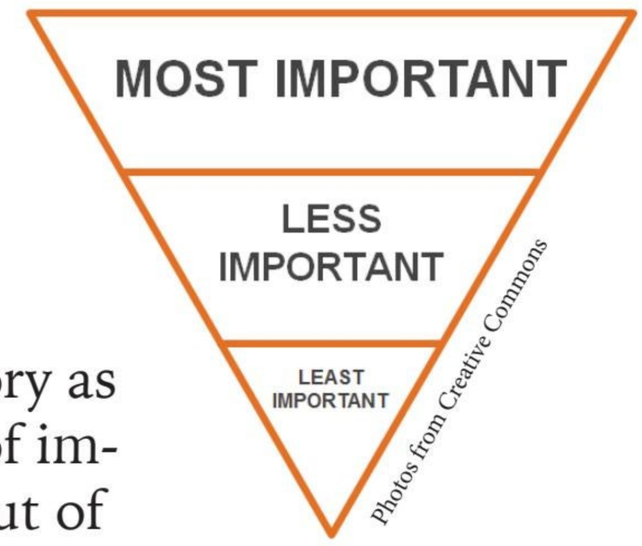
EXTENSIONS

May be granted by Reeves and EIC or ME when a key event must still transpire.

But you should always fact-gather and write a draft even if you are waiting for another development.

Communication is CRUCIAL.

THE INVERTED PYRAMID

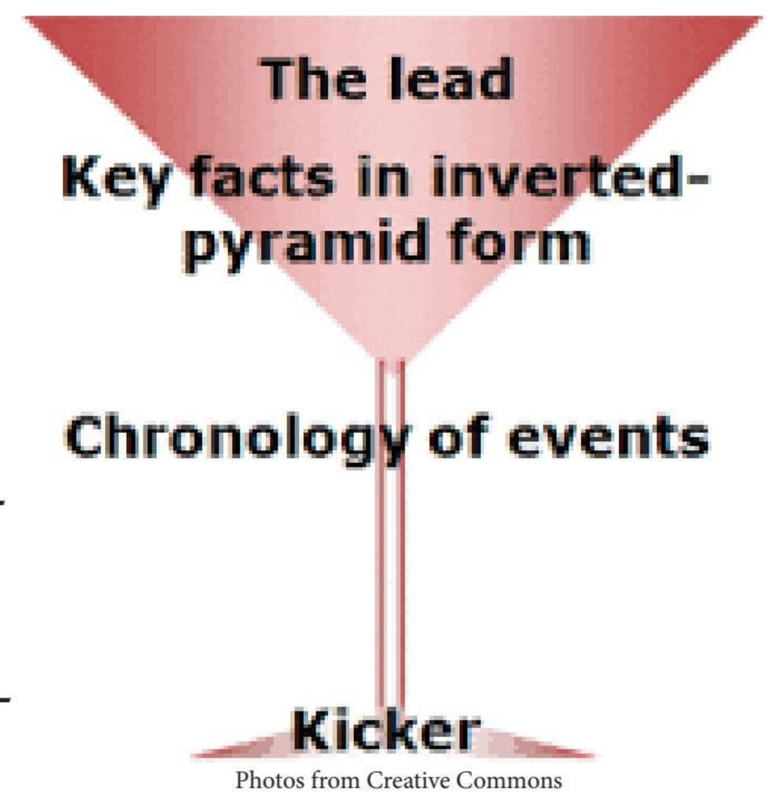


Best for: News briefs, stories about breaking news

Not recommended for: Anything else.

How it works:
Summarize the key facts in a concise lead. Then organize the story as logically as possible, arranging paragraphs in descending order of importance. End the story when you run out of facts (or you run out of room on the page).

THE MARTINI GLASS



Also known as: The hourglass.

Best for: Crimes, disasters, or other dramatic news stories where you want to include a chronology to explain how events unfolded.

How it works:
Begin with an inverted-pyramid summary of the story's most important facts. Once that's done, shift into a chronological narrative. (Try setting it up with a phrase such as 'Police gave this account of the accident:). Then detail what happened, step by step. If possible, end with a kicker (a surprise twist or strong closing quote).

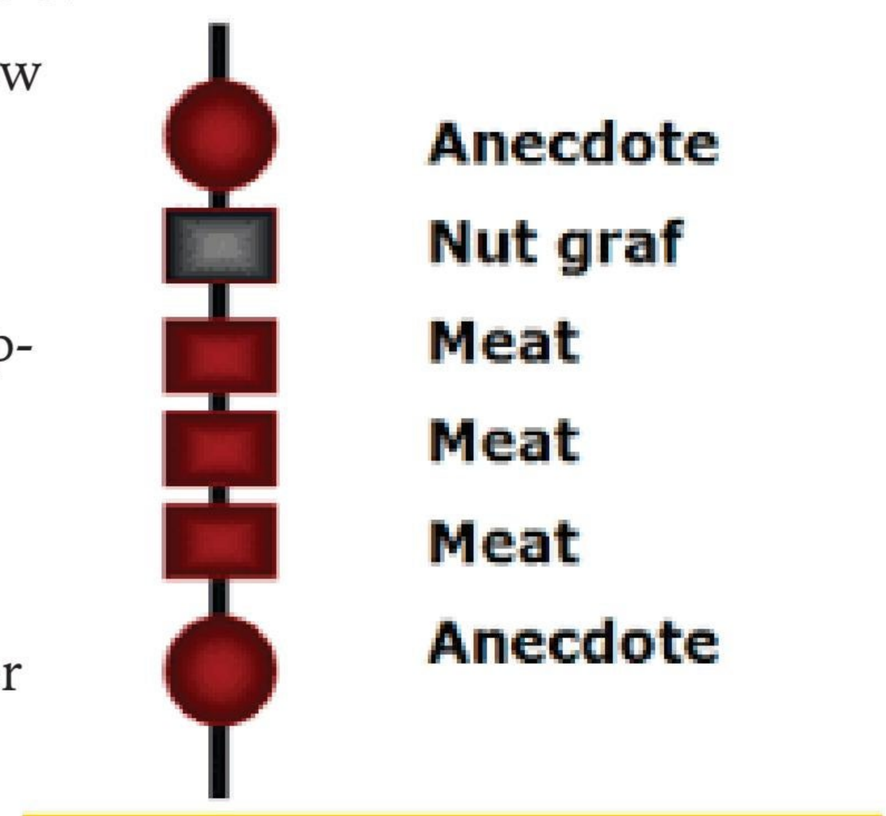
THE KABOB

Also known as: The Wall Street Journal formula or the circle.

Best for: Stories on trends or events where you want to show how actual people are affected or involved.

How it works:
The story begins with a quote or anecdote about a specific person. Then it broadens into a general discussion of the topic. It ends by returning to that specific person again.

Think of it as arranging meat and veggies on a shish-kabob skewer: start with a juicy red tomato (an anecdote). Follow that with a nut graf. Then add meat - chunk after chunk after chunk - until you reach the end, where you reprise with another tomato (a final anecdote).



The Wall Street Journal is well known for writing stories this way.

Choosing the person

1. **NO NEPOTISM!** (favoritism shown to relatives or friends) It undermines our credibility as a professional, detached fair source of information. The Dispatch is not our private affair.
2. Don't write the story if you are involved as a participant. Someone else can write it.
3. Don't print inside staff jokes. What happens in F203 stays in F203.
4. DO reach underrepresented groups and topics. Let their voices be heard!

"The better I treat people, the better the information I get. I remember that just because I wear a Press card, it gives me no special claim. People have no obligation to let me into their time and life to ask probing questions."

Ray Saurez, "Wait, Wait… Don't Tell Me!"

Photos from Creative Commons

Before the Interview

1. Be **PREPARED**. Find out all you can about the person/event. Have at least five questions ready, but make it a conversation.
2. Don't ask questions that could have been discovered beforehand.
3. Gather statements ahead of time that the person can comment on. For example: "Some have said _____. Do you have a comment about that?"
5. Know what you are going to ask, so you can watch your subject for reactions.
6. Have your phone/recording device charged ahead of time.

During the Interview

1. Be **ON TIME**. Most people have other things to do, so the worst thing you can do is arrive late.
2. **EXPLAIN** your story and purpose. Don't start questioning without giving the person the big picture.
3. **ASK PERMISSION TO RECORD** the interview.

And record a statement that protects us legally: "Please state your name and that you know you are being recorded for this interview…"

5. Start **EASY.** "Softball" Save the hardest questions after a warm-up period. Save your toughest question for last.
6. **Smile**. People tend to feel more comfortable if they see that you aren't out for blood.
7. **DO the NOD-and-wait:** The person will keep talking as you nod but say nothing - as the questions get harder.

GOT A TOUGH INTERVIEW?

1. Talk PAST the "no comment" or the banal remark. Try "Can you confirm___?" even after the person has dug his/her heels in.
2. Stroke their ego with additional questions that refer to their position, achievement, power. You're greasing the wheel.
3. Start a new vein because the old one isn't going anywhere.
4. Seek out the CONFLICT the person understands/faces. Try to understand their understanding of the conflict at hand.
5. Ask him/her: "What would you LOVE to see printed in this story? What would you HATE to see printed?"

Expert Tips

1. **ATTEND:** Go to the game/practice/performance before the interview. Or research the topic ahead. You'll have triple the count of things to ask.
2. **DRAMA IS A GREAT VEIN:** Peck around until you have discovered it. The fear, the challenge, the irony, the revenge, etc. Drama makes a good feature and good sports.
3. **GET THE STORY THAT HASN'T BEEN TOLD:** Don't interview so you can write the obvious story. Interview so you can tell the UNTOLD. You might want to share this purpose with the person, perhaps.

14 Writing Process

THE DISPATCH | STAFF MANUAL

So you have been assigned to a story in FLOW, what now?

Start

Don't just sit there and chat/using social media during 2nd period. Good reporters are always gathering and thinking.

Some Ideas for Time & Effectiveness:

1. Read other journalistic articles about your topic. Research on the web. You'll learn facts, raise questions, + develop information to bring to interviews with your sources.

Get/find info you DID NOT know beforehand. You need to go into an interview

2. Make an appointment with teachers or admin. Learn their prep period, send an email, etc. **>> LATE INTERVIEWS MEAN LATE STORIES**

Free/prep periods are the best. Admin appointments need to be made over email in advance.

3. Meet with editor, designer/photographer. Meet with Reeves. Discussion and planning create GREAT stories. Working in teams = a great plan for creating the best content.

4. Get locations of other students from the posted schedules in the server. Then you're ready to FIND sources on this campus.

Remember at least one adult and two student sources per story.

5. Plan live interviews. FIT works best. Or arrange to meet at lunch. Interviewing only on Social Media or text is weak sauce.

You'll probably need to meet them at the door of their classroom to remind.

6. Interview during periods 2 or 6 in F203. HOW: Schedule an interview during Newspaper class. Arrange to meet your interviewee during lunches at those times or for them to meet you in F203.

You can start interviews on social media, but get the best stuff in person.

7. Interview during lunch. Students are just eating or hanging out. They aren't busy. Interview them. Arrange this ahead of time so you know where to meet.

Say you're from the Dispatch. We stalk people.

8. Plan to watch a "live moment" of this assignment. You will write authoritatively when you have seen it with your own eyes. Learn game schedule, class period, practice.

We want narrative, descriptive details, which come from OBSERVATIONAL JOURNALISM

9. Find DESIGN INSPIRATION Use the books available in Reeves' room. Look at past issues. Search the internet.

Writers need to participate with the team.

10. Plan a survey. See what trends are in the topic you're covering. What do JBHS students think? Write your questions.

Remember to get these approved by Reeves & Robinson

A reporter must favor objective, realistic details. Do not be a cheerleader, an evaluator, or salesperson.

1. Avoid first person except opinion pieces. Third is best.

2. Remove words that suggest your opinion.

3. Choose **objective, realistic, factual** words free from added meaning/connotation.

4. Clarify your wording with "s/he said" so origin is clear.

5. Shorten your sentence counts - shorter is less biased.

6. No editorializing or cheer-leading. End with a quote.

Objective reporting

"Objectivity in journalism aims to help the audience make up their own mind about a story, providing the facts alone and then letting audiences interpret those on their own. To maintain objectivity in journalism, journalists should present the facts whether or not they like or agree with those facts. Objective reporting is meant to portray issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner, regardless of the writer's opinion or personal beliefs."

Roy Peter Clark

"The Pyramid of Journalism Competence: What Journalists Need to Know"

Pointer. 2014. Web. 28 Sept. 2015.

You must limit and often strip your writing of its subjective or imprecise words as a journalist that limit the factual realism.

	YES	NO
1	When Jessica tosses her red cap this June, the University of Texas will be gaining an aspiring guitarist.	When Jessica graduates from JBHS, the University of Texas will be gaining one incredibly cool girl.
2	Sam sets weekly expectations for himself hoping to someday write for a magazine.	Sam sets great expectations for himself hoping to someday write for a magazine.
3	See Teixeira walking by on campus? She says she'll be glad to talk more.	So if you find yourself standing nonchalantly around during lunch or nutrition, and Ms. Teixeira just happens to walk by, take it upon yourself to approach her and engage in a conversation.

TELL STORIES

Narrate it step-by-step. Show it happening with your words. Take the reader there. Be a storyteller.

You'll do this best if you observe details perceptively and find the perfect words to capture them.

How can you narrate the game, the event, the student's skills, the teacher's style unless you carve out time to WATCH AND OBSERVE?

Observation

To bring news stories to life, you need to engage your senses - and the reader's too.

There's an old expression that editors and reporters love to quote over and over: show, don't tell.

Suppose you're covering a dorm fire. You talk to the fire chief, the cop, the students. They tell you all about the alarm, the response, the damage - but where's the drama? The realism? The sense of tragedy?

Show, don't tell.

When you're at the fire scene, engage your eyes, your ears, your journalistic radar. Who are the victims? What are they doing? What are they wearing? Are they clutching pets? Possessions? Each other?

As a reporter, you're not simply a stenographer. You're an eyewitness, a spectator with a front-row seat. You're the eyes, the ears, the senses of the reader who visits the scene through the power of your words.

The ability to observe accurately - to record events so faithfully that details jump right off the page - is the secret to great reporting. In fact, it's the key to success in any kind of writing, which explains why so many successful novelists - Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, Willa Cather - began as reporters.

SIGHT

Yes, it's time to use your eyeballs to notice the little things: the bald spot on the back of a man's head; the tattoos on a woman's hands' the exit wound behind the dictator's ear. The more vividly the visual details, the more they capture what the reporter is sees, the more you will capture your readers. The attention to detail lets you view the scene as if you're looking through the reporter's eyes.

SOUND

Capturing sounds on the printed page isn't easy. In fact, you'll find some stories (say, a profile of a comic who does celebrity impressions) may be better suited for a podcast or a video if they're dependent on sound for their success.

Still, skilled writers employ all their senses to capture the smells, tastes and (yes) sounds of their stories.

EMOTION

It's not easy. Capturing the moods and emotions of strangers, without adding inappropriate goo or schmultz, is terrifically difficult to do. And it's usually best reserved for the right moment in the right feature story. But notice, in these examples, how the writers show you the scene, in simple and direct language, without telling you how to feel.

ACTION

Why are so many news stories so dull? In part, it's because nothing ever happens. There's just no action. If you want to write a dull sports story, for example, just quote the coach and spout some statistics. But if you want to bring that story to life, describe how the big play unfolded, how the touchdowns got scored, how the players celebrated and the fans went nuts.

Photos from Creative Commons

Dissecting the attribution

"The tennis courts have really benefited the team because on top of looking nice, we are able to have our own space to play and for spectators to watch away from distractions," junior Cristina Canepa said. "The only downside I would say is that the fences are not any higher than regular courts, so it is easy to lose balls into the parking lot."

- Always start with a quotation mark.
- If you have more than one sentence, place the attribution between the sentences.
- There is a comma before the closing quotation mark of the 1st sentence.
- The attribution will always be: Title name said. Always.
- Once you give someones title and first name, you will use their last name from then on.
- Start the second sentence with a quotation mark and punctuate normally until the end quotation mark.
- The Dispatch style for individuals with the same last name who are related is to revert to first names, once you introduce the second person, you revert to first names from that point forward.
- For individuals who have the same last name who are not related is to use both first and last name throughout the article.
- Only capitalize titles that are proper nouns. English teacher, but not math teacher. President Joe Biden, but not junior Sarah Smith.

Quote/Transition Formula

Side Notes

1. Each box is a new paragraph.
2. Story should flow from most important to least important information.
3. Leading statements tell the reader what the source is going to say next. Don't do this.
4. Always end all news & feature stories with a quote Exception: briefs

Lead:
Hard News: 5 W's 1H
Feature writing: Narrative, storytelling. Paint the picture from the start.

Linked

Nutgraf:
Hard News: may or may not appear
Feature writing: Continue the narrative, or 5 W's 1H

Direct Quote:
Connects to nutgraf or lead
Use more than one sentence
Feelings and emotions

Linked

Transition/Statement:
Next important fact
Indirect quote or partial quote, okay
No "leading" statements

Direct Quote:
Connects to the first transition
Use more than one sentence
Feelings and emotions

Linked

Transition:
Next important fact
Indirect quote or partial quote, okay
No "leading" statements

Direct Quote:
Connects to the first transition
Use more than one sentence
Feelings and emotions

And so on,
until the story is told

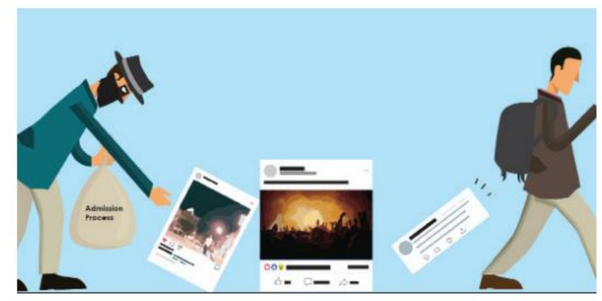
Adapted from ILPC News Writing by Jeanne Acton, UIL Journalism & ILPC Director. Used with permission.

Editorial

• Staff editorials represent the opinion of the editorial board arrived at by discussion and will not be bylined. Bylined articles are the opinion of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Dispatch staff or administration as a whole.
• The current editorial board is comprised of all page editors, plus the online editorial staff. The editorial board changes yearly and is determined by the editor(s)-in-chief, managing editor(s) and the adviser.
• The editorial will be accompanied by a political cartoon that may or may not take the same stance as the editorial. The content of the editorial cartoon is at the discretion of the staff artist assigned to create the piece.

Personal Opinion Stories

• Personal opinion stories are written by staff members and are their personal views on a topic. They do not represent the entire Dispatch staff, the school, or AISD.
• Personal opinion stories will be labeled and there will be a photo of the writer, and contact information provided to reach the writer.
• The general format for all personal opinion stories is as follows:


Art by Sumin Kim. Used with permission.

Paragraph 1 - summarize the issue
Paragraph 2 - state a stance on the topic
Paragraph 3 - support your stance with one reason why you think you are right
Paragraph 4 - support your stance with a second reason why you think you are right
Paragraph 5 - support your stance with a third reason why you think you are right
Paragraph 6 - refute the other side - this means to prove and provide evidence why they are wrong
Paragraph 7 - come up with a solution and provide it here
Paragraph 8 - restate your stance

You may include 1 extra summary paragraph at the beginning if necessary
You may also include 1 extra support paragraph
You may also include 1 extra paragraph to refute the other side
You may also include 1 more paragraph to give your solution.

Art by Amorah Schulte. Used with permission.

Personal Column

• On a yearly basis, Dispatch staff members are given the option to apply to write a personal column in multiple sections across the paper. These columns will appear on a regular basis in print or online.
• The format of the column is up to the writer and may be very specifically focused on one select topic, i.e. sports, politics, entertainment, etc.
• Personal columns will be labeled and there will be a photo of the writer, and contact information provided to reach the columnist.

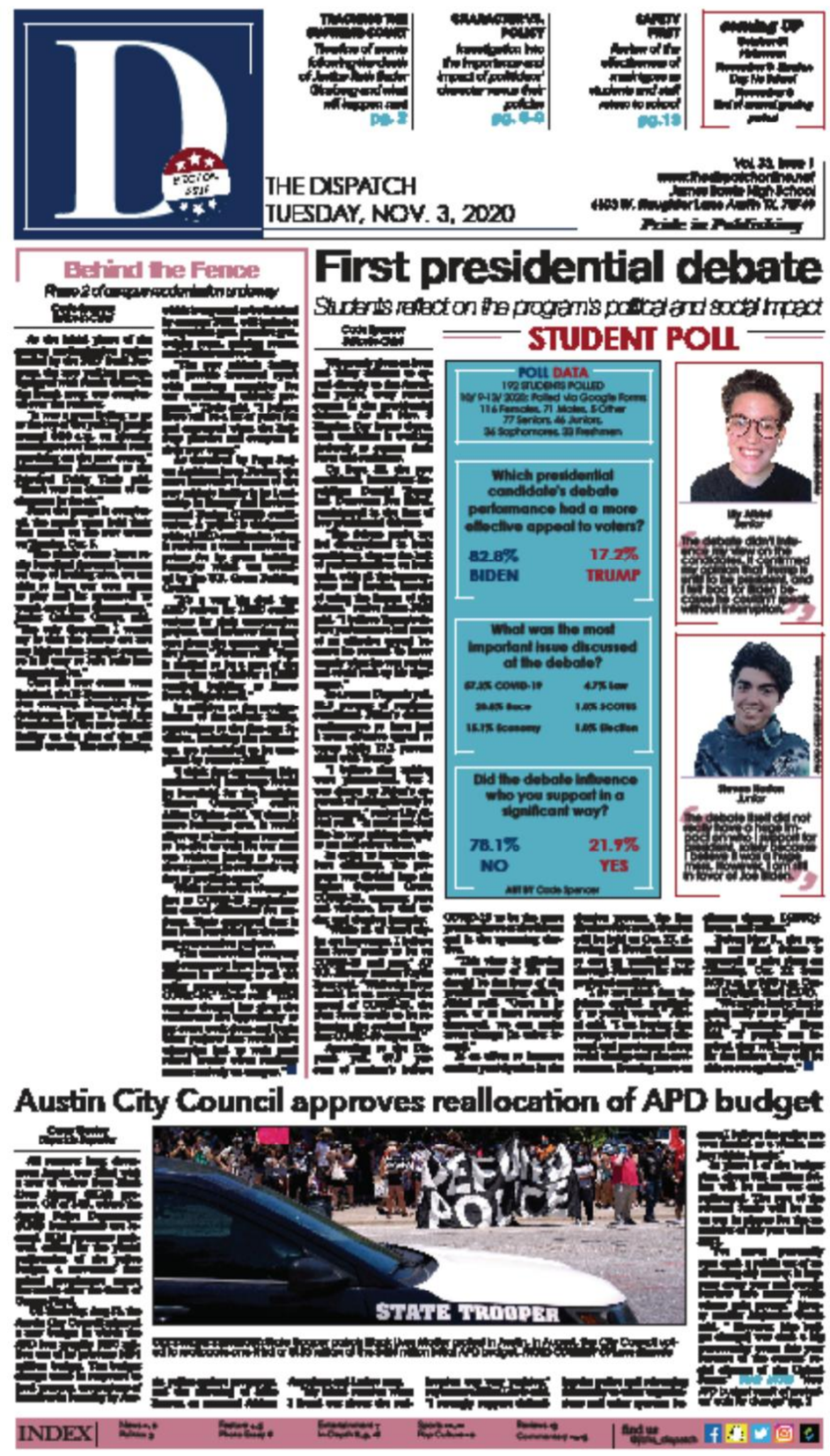
Letters to the editor

• The Dispatch welcomes reader input. Please send any letters, articles, comments or corrections to bowie.journalism@gmail.com, call (512) 841-4184, mail them to 4103 W. Slaughter Lane, Austin, TX 78749 or drop them off in room F-214 with adviser Michael Reeves or any editor. Letters must be signed, and emailed letters will require verification before publication. We will not necessarily publish all letters received and reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

Staff Photographer expectations

Dispatch photographers retain the copyright on the images they produce while on staff. If they are on assignment, use Dispatch equipment, or show a press pass to gain entry to an event, they agree to temporarily transfer the copyright to the Dispatch until the end of the publication cycle (generally every six weeks). They cannot sell, share or desiminate those images for that time period. At the end of the cycle, they may share, sell or give images to who they want. The Dispatch may also sell or give those images away from that point forward with photographer permission. Photographers who use their own equipment, are not on assignment, or do not use a Dispatch press pass to gain entry to an event, are not considered Dispatch photographers at that time and should not pass themselves off as a member of staff.

Responsibility for accuracy and objectivity


THE DISPATCH
TUESDAY, NOV. 3, 2020

Behind the Fence

First presidential debate
Students reflect on the program's political and social impact

STUDENT POLL

POLL DATA
192 STUDENTS POLLED
10/ 9-13/ 2020: Polled via Google Forms
116 Females, 71 Males, 5 Other
77 Seniors, 46 Juniors,
36 Sophomores, 33 Freshmen

Which presidential candidate's debate performance had a more effective appeal to voters?
82.8% BIDEN
17.2% TRUMP

What was the most important issue discussed at the debate?
67.5% COVID-19
4.7% Law
20.8% Race
1.0% SCOTUS
15.1% Economy
1.0% Election

Did the debate influence who you support in a significant way?
78.1% NO
21.9% YES

Austin City Council approves reallocation of APD budget

STATE TROOPER

INDEX

- Dispatch staff members endeavor to correctly spell names and make accurate class and position identifications. Names of students, faculty, administration and other sources must be checked for accuracy by the writer.
- The district, administration, editor or adviser are not responsible for inaccuracy in presenting names within a story.
- All facts must be verifiable by at least two sources. All quotes are subject to verification by the editors and/or adviser. Any story containing factious quotes will be discarded in its entirety and the writer will be removed from the program. No exceptions.
- Each staff member is responsible for maintaining their own interview notes and recording. They are responsible for keeping all interviews and related notes for one calendar year.
- Most of what is published is the work of individual's. Dispatch staff members are responsible for all material which appears in the publications. Administrators have a non-review role: they may, according the Hazelwood court decision, control content prior to publication, may offer advice on sensitive issues and offer warranted criticisms following publication.
- The Dispatch staff strives for the highest standards of accuracy, integrity, completeness and careful research in its presentation of material that time allows. Since there are deadlines to meet, however, school publications will go to press with the facts as they stand on deadline. The staff therefore assumes responsibility for the accuracy of these facts.
- Rumor, gossip or innuendo are not, nor will they ever be, the basis for any story appearing in the Dispatch.
- No member of the publications staff will accept any free gifts, considerations or passes that might compromise the integrity of the school's publications or the objectivity of its reporters. The adviser may provide press pass to various local, state and national events to students that will be provided for publication purposes only.
- All copy must conform to the Dispatch style book, which is available to all staff members. When the publications' stylebook does not have the answer, writers will consult the AP Stylebook.
- ***When an error merits a proper correction, as determined by the editor or adviser, it will be promptly published in the next publication.***
- School publications are a member of the UIL-ILPC, TAJE, NSPA, CSPA, Quill and Scroll, ATPI, SIPA, and JEA professional organizations and receive critiques from some of these sources and will adhere to these organizations guidelines.

Online take down request

- Only the writer/photographer, or editor, has the right to remove a story from the online edition or social media. Editors may request the adviser to take a story down if they cannot access SNO, or need support to remove a story.
- Stories and photos will only be pulled for factual errors, blatant violations of the NSPA Code of Ethics, extreme circumstances, or potential safety concerns. If corrections can be made to digitally "fix" any errors, they will be made first, before pulling a story. This includes misspelled words/names, incorrect dates, location errors, or similar typos. If an error can be corrected factually, all attempts will be made.
- Disputes about quotes will be handled on an individual basis and will include the writer, editor and adviser to verify and determine if an error has been made that required the story to be taken down or altered.
- A letter of "request of removal" for a story or photo can be submitted to the adviser (bowie.journalism@gmail.com - students will need to email from a non-AISD account) and will be considered on an individual basis. The final decision rests with the current year Leadership Team upon consultation with the adviser and, if necessary, SPLC lawyers. Requests will be handled in as timely a manner as possible to reach a final decision. The Dispatch will never pull down the online version of a print edition.
- Take-down requests for social media, including Instagram, Twitter and Facebook will be handled in a similar fashion as listed above. Students who actively pose, or agree to a photo or story, also agree that their image can be used in our print edition, online, social media and all other publication forms. There is no difference between a story or photo on any Dispatch publication/product. Curation of social media presences is not a valid reason for removal except in situations as outlined above.
- A former writer/photographer may request a story they wrote to be removed from the online edition by direct request in writing. The writer/photographer may only do this after graduation or in extreme circumstances.

Publishing Standards

• The Dispatch staff will cover school, city, state, national and international events and issues that affect or concern the campus, its students or its readers in a non-bias method.
• Dispatch writers will attempt to cover all aspect of the school; however, coverage will depend greatly upon an item's news value (how important or interesting it would be to the majority of the school population). Publication editors determine the news value of all material. The staff will meet on a regular basis to pitch story ideas for publication. A robust discussion will ensure as editors determine the best content for publication. The final decision to publish any and all stories lies with the Editor-in-Chief.
• The Dispatch writers will clearly identify sources of news, except when it is necessary to uphold the journalist's privilege of protecting the identity of sources. When in such case, the journalist must reveal the source to the adviser, who will determine if the source is creditable. The Dispatch reserves the right to publish stories with anonymous sources, but all efforts will be made to use public sources.
• The publication staff will avoid sensationalizing news and events. Publications do not invade personal privacy or print material that might be embarrassing or degrading to any individual or group.
• All editorial or commentary content is the opinion of the individual writer, or in the case of the editorial the opinion of the editorial board, and they are responsible for verifying facts, providing sources for those facts, and establishing a credible reason for publishing the story.
• Online stories must have a minimum of two sources, all print stories require at least three sources, except briefs.

Bylines, Ownership and Copyright

• Any full length story that includes original reporting will carry a proper byline including title.
• Any art or photo will carry a credit line.
• Any story which expresses an author's opinion or analysis will carry a byline and a standing column head with photo to indicate the story represents an individual opinion.
• Staff editorials will not carry a byline and are the opinion of the staff as determined by the editorial board.
• Any story written or photo taken for the Dispatch cannot be reproduced in any fashion without consent from the writer or photographer, per American copyright law.
• All content (written, photos and art) published belong to the author and cannot be reproduced without permission.
• The adviser requests students not to sell or distribute owned materials until after publication to avoid competition and readership.
• Photos and stories published in the Dispatch publications (print, online or social media) will not break any copyright laws.

Death Policy

• High school newspapers sometimes have to report on a student or school faculty or staff member's death. The following are guidelines in handling such stories. Generalized stories can run in the newspaper for any death.
• A death ruled a "suicide", involving illegal activities, or drug/alcohol will not be reported on nor will a tribute of any kind run in the publication.
• Suicide, illegal activities or drug/alcohol related deaths may be generalized and show the compass of the situation, but the story cannot name of the student involved.
• Students who die of "natural" causes can be spotlighted in the Dispatch. The story or tribute must be approved by the adviser, who will act as the liaison between the school principal and parents.
• Faculty and staff members who die of "natural" causes can be spotlighted in the Dispatch. The story or tribute must be approved by the adviser, who will act as the liaison between the school principal and surviving family members.
• Student, faculty and staff deaths will be covered once, and only once with the exception of annual memorial events which may take place in the community.
• Graduates or former faculty members who pass away will not be covered in the Dispatch except in special circumstances. That decision will be made after a discussion between the current Leadership Team and the adviser. In most cases if a decision is made to publish a story, it will be brief in nature and not covered in the same manner as a current student, faculity or staff member.

AI in the 21st Century

The use of AI like ChatGPT, Google Cloud Learning Machine or similar programs for any content produced in the Dispatch products will result in the immediate removal fof the offending student rom the program. Any piece that is found to have been created by AI will be removed from Dispatch products when discovered. All staff is expected to produce their own original content at all times. We will not accept any material produced by AI.

Seven Key Ethics Points

1 Be Responsible.

2 Be Fair.

3 Be Honest.

4 Be Accurate.

5 Be Independent.

6 Minimize Harm.

7 Be Accountable.

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The NSPA

Members of the Dispatch staff are introduced to the NSPA Code of Ethics during their introductory year in Journalism 1 or Photojournalism. Multiple lessons are presented to make sure that when they become staff members, they understand their role as a scholastic journalist.

Throughout their career on staff, there are many discussions about these ethical rules and how they impact the decision making process from writing, designing, editorials, and more.

Key components of the Code include, from the introduction:

Another challenge for beginning journalists involves their scope of awareness. As they gain news media experience, their competence improves, their vision broadens and they develop a more panoramic understanding of their craft — including the ethics of journalism. As their insight expands, students become more adept at avoiding errors, misjudgment and other deficiencies caused by inexperience and an undeveloped ethical compass.

Developing a sense of ethics is essential for student journalists, who learn to distinguish right from wrong and good from bad in their work. The power of news media can be used in good or bad ways, and young journalists must be nurtured to develop the self-discipline to choose what's right and good — even when the right choice may cost something in the short run.

The term ethics comes from the Greek word "ethos," which means character. An ethical person is a person of good character who strives to make "right" choices. Those "right" choices are self-determined by each individual. Ultimately, ethics is voluntary conduct that is self-enforced.

Although ethics is related to law, it differs from law in that law is socially determined and socially enforced. Law tells us what we can do; ethics, what we should do. What is legal may not be what is ethical. Having the right to say something doesn't make it right to say it.

Ethical choices often are not easy. Dilemmas occur when two "right" moral obligations conflict. For example, suppose a yearbook staff member lies to the editor about why she needs an extension on an important deadline. The editor comes to you, the staff member's friend, seeking confirmation of the excuse that was given. Two moral virtues collide: loyalty to a friend and commitment to truth. It is time to weigh your values.

Prior review and prior restraint

- The Dispatch is an open forum for student expression. The Dispatch is not reviewed by school administration prior to distribution, and the adviser will not act as a censor. Content represents the views of the student staff and not school or district officials.
- The Bowie administration, since the inception of the Dispatch in 1988, has not acted as an obstacle to publication. No review or restraint has been implied or requested with the exception of surveys in 2019-2020 through the 2022-23 school year. The request was recended in 2023 and the publication was free from prior review for the start of the 2023-24 year.

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THE DISPATCH
James Bowie High School

PRIDE IN PUBLISHING

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