Digital and Advanced Digital Media Production:
What Makes Good Yearbook Design - Student Life
April 6, 2020

Learning Target:
Students Will Be Able to Identify and Critique Good Yearbook Design For Student Life Pages

Let's Get Started:

Look at the four thumbnails of student life pages from around the nation.

What stands out about them?

Which is your favorite?

Why?

What is a Student Life Page?

Student life sections are home to the most-talked-about events of the year: homecoming, prom, pep rallies. But they can also be home to the every-day events that might otherwise be forgotten in yearbook coverage: first-day-of-school rituals, exchange student program.

These are typically the first pages readers see and towards the front of a lot of book. In a Chronological Book, they are throughout the book and many times the main focus.

A good student life section will cover both types of events, and use a mix of great photography and strong narrative to tell the story.

That's where great design comes into play. Check out the spreads we've highlighted here. They offer several different ways to achieve the same goal.

What is a Student Life Page at Your School?

Brainstorm a list of events and topics that could be featured as Student Life Pages in your yearbook?

These can be events but can also be topics including trends, jobs, out of school activities, etc.

Think of topics that might not have appeared in your past yearbooks. What would you like to see in future yearbooks?

This will be helpful in future planning for your school's yearbooks.

Thinking Outside the Box?

Many times, student life pages can begin with a simple topic or questions. Look at this link about unique yearbook article/topic ideas.

Do any catch your attention? Are there any that could be topics at your school?

How would you make these ideas work for the yearbook at your school?

10 Yearbook Design Elements

1.Two Pages are Better than One – Always Design as Double Page Spreads

2. Don't Fence Me In – But do use columns. Columns give the spread structure, so once you commit to the number of columns, keep it for that spread and section of the book

3. The Shape of things to Come - You have three shapes to use – horizontal rectangle, vertical rectangle and square. Don't create design problems by using odd shaped or circular elements – there's time for that later. For now, keep it simple.

4. Bigger and Better – Start with a Dominant Photo Placing a quality photo that is two to three times larger than the next largest photo will give the eye a place to start.

5. Center-gy - Design from the Gutter Out - Want to get rid of that trapped white space next to the gutter? Work from the center out and add the subdominant photos from the gutter out.

10 Yearbook Design Elements

6. Another Brick in the Wall -Maintain a Consistent Internal Margin - Having one pica of space between all elements will keep the eyes on the photos and copy, and away from distracting white space. Just like a brick wall has a consistent amount of space between bricks and what you notice are the bricks, not the mortar separating them.

7. 'White' Open Spaces - Leave some white space in the corners and keep all white space to the outside. This creates a diamond shape on the spread and also creates better balance. It also keeps the reader from being overwhelmed by too much stuff.

8. Bleed Only Once in Each Direction - Too much of anything is too much. Bleeding elements are effective when used with discretion, but too much takes away the impact. Use it once and use it wisely. This is when a photo or design element goes off the page.

9. Where are Those Captions? - The captions should be next to the photos they identify – and stack no more than two. Your reader should be able to easily tell which caption goes with each photo.

10. What am I Doing Here? Never surround text with photos. It creates unwanted areas of white space and limits the amount of text that can be placed inside of it. Keeping text to the outside of the spread will allow the writer more flexibility for captions and copy.

Identifying Strong and Creative Yearbook Design in Student Life Pages

Look at the page to the right.

What elements from above does the page Include?

Is anything missing or not use correctly?

What do you like about page?

What would or could you do differently if you designed it?

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More Practice - Finding Student Life Pages to Critique

Explore the two links below that look at a variety of Student Life pages from a variety of schools.

https://www.pinterest.com/wallaceybk/yearbook-academicsstudent-life/

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/195765915033586703/

Find five spreads that catch your attention and answer the questions to the right.

Look at the page to the right.

What elements From above does the page Include?

Is anything missing or not use correctly?

What do you like about page?

What would or could you do differently if you designed it?

Would you include a page like this in your yearbook?

Resources/Other Important Articles on the Subject

[Seven Key Tips For Good Yearbook Design](#)

[What Should a School Yearbook Include?](#)

[Don't Know What to Include in a Yearbook? Start With This List](#)