

# Time To Get A STUDENT LIFE

## The Most Interesting!

The Student Life section is generally going to be the most interesting section in your book. Most books lead with this section, because most of what is covered in it happens early in the year (Homecoming, registration, spirit week, summer activities, etc.) and can be used for the color section of the yearbook. Because the weather is often still good early in the year, this makes for better color photos as well.

The section should be approximately 23% of the total pages in your book, minus any pages you use as advertising. Let's explore some ways to make this section better!



## Chronological Coverage

The most common method of Student Life section organization is to cover the events of the year chronologically. Please don't forget to get summer in your yearbook. Many staffs overlook the chance to cover the student's entire year, which starts the minute the previous yearbook concludes. Your book (and supplement, if you are doing a spring delivery book) should include your school's year from the day after graduation 2003 through graduation 2004.

## Don't Miss Summer

This includes summer jobs, summer workshops and camps, trips, summer exchange students and early sports and band practices. And don't forget to get a few shots of back-to-school shopping. After all, that's what August is all about. If you didn't get any summer photos this past summer, put some announcements and posters out around school asking for students to bring in their best summer photos showing students doing things. Big word of warning: you do not have to use them all. Make sure to take good care of them and give them back with a note of thanks. Otherwise, remember to take your own next year.



## Don't Make Homecoming #1

Putting Homecoming first in this section can be a big no-no. After all, a lot happens before we ever get to Homecoming.

Try to cover the first day of school. For most freshmen, that's a bigger day than Homecoming will ever be (yes, freshmen deserve coverage too!). Also, don't forget about pep rallies, yearbook signing (if you do a fall book), dances, holidays, or just the simple things that happen on any given day at your school.

If you are stuck in the homecoming/spirit week rut, try to find some interesting yearbooks with different topics in their Student Life sections to emulate.

## But Do It Right!

Speaking of Homecoming, when you cover it, cover it all! Not just the royalty getting crowned. It's important that you show the whole story of Homecoming, from the early preparations to the final cleanup. This is an excellent chance to cover a lot of people—use it!

One great example we saw recently featured a DPS-sized photo of a couple dancing overlaid with film-strip shots of many different people doing things that involved Homecoming from morning to night. Pictures of guys picking up corsages to girls getting their hair done to the custodian sweeping the floor of the gym at midnight—26 pictures in all—WOW!



## Spirit Week?

At most schools I work with, Spirit Week comes before Homecoming, yet, in many books, it comes after Homecoming. In some cases this is done so that Homecoming pages can be in color. But the sad thing is, many schools' Homecoming photos are not anywhere near as colorful as the spirit week pictures.

## Is There Life After Homecoming?

In case you never noticed, Student Life or Activities do not come to a complete stop once Homecoming is over (that's sarcasm!).

That is exactly what happens in many yearbooks. There is so much that happens in the fall and early winter; some of it is associated with holidays such as Halloween and Thanksgiving and Christmas, fall plays, school dances and maybe even the ordering of yearbooks or class rings. Plan now to cover it all.



## There Is So Much More...

There is more we could say about Student Life but since a picture is worth a thousand words, we thought we would show you a superb example page from Richmond High School in Richmond, IN.

They decided student life was more than just events but places as well with wonderful, people-packed pages on such great topics as their hallways, their gym, their performing arts center with wonderful QuickReads and minifeatures.

You should try to do the same thing. Go beyond the norm and really cover the life of your students, after all that's what Student Life is all about!

## Don't Forget Special Stuff

While you're at it, don't forget any special coverage for events that don't happen every year. Perhaps this is a major anniversary in the life of your school, like the 25th, 50th or 100th. Or your building has just been renovated. If your school is having a big celebration, make sure you cover it in this section.

## An All-Year Section

Remember that Student Life goes on all year. If your book is a fall delivery book, it should cover everything from the final awards assembly to the last senior trip and, of course, graduation. Spring books should find a way to get it all in as well by using a supplement or year-to-year coverage. This means starting the student life coverage in April when your previous book finished in March. Kind of strange sounding but some schools do it.

## A Few Final Words...

Writing for this section must be styled as a report on certain topics (Homecoming, spirit week, etc.) and as a feature on others (weekends, jobs, etc.).

Keep it positive. Don't let your attitude in this section be sarcastic, negative or worse. Remember that your students look to you to record **their** memories. The key word is **"their."** Even though you may not think much of homecoming or spirit week, make sure you cover it in a positive light. Don't lie about it, but give it the most positive twist possible.

Things that do not belong in this section include: senior favorites, huge posed shots of royalty, photo collages and double-page spreads that have no purpose. A Student Life section is not just a bunch of unrelated photos that look good together. Each spread needs an eye-catching headline, a QuickRead, feature or story, good feature photos with captions and a tie-in to the theme of the section.

