

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

3- or 4-member team or up to 2 individuals

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please thoroughly read the General CDE Rules Section at the beginning of this handbook for complete rules and procedures relevant to State FFA Career Development Events.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the agricultural communications career development event is to showcase agricultural communications careers to as many FFA members as possible. Public communications about agricultural products, practices and policies are essential to the future of agriculture. Students have a bright future in the job market when equipped with strong communication skills, teamwork skills, and the ability to analyze a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the industry of agriculture.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. Identify agricultural communications best practices, standards and ethics.
2. Apply selected Associated Press style guidelines.
3. Analyze and evaluate visual and written media.
4. Demonstrate ability to write clearly and concisely.

EVENT RULES FOR THE PRELIMINARY COMPETITION

All participants MUST be in official FFA dress or will be disqualified.

1. Participants will NOT be able to use any reference materials during this contest. The only acceptable resource is a No. 2 pencil with which the participant will record his/her answers on the Scansheet for JudgingCard.com.
2. Up to four FFA members may participate in the preliminary portion of the competition. The three highest individual scores on a team will constitute a team score (low individual score on a team will be dropped).

III. EVENT FORMAT

A. Team Make-Up

Each chapter may enter up to one team consisting of no more than four FFA members in the preliminary competition to earn a place in the finals of the Oklahoma FFA Career Development Event in Agricultural Communications.

B. Equipment

1. Participants will use a Scansheet for use with JudgingCard.com to record their responses.
2. Each participant must have their own No. 2 pencil.

C. Preliminary Event Schedule

Preliminary event shall take place in TBA beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday, TBA. Each contestant shall complete the event in the time allotted. The following will be administered as one packet to complete in 45 minutes.

1. AP Style Exam
2. Communications Component 1: Photography
3. Communications Component 2: Graphics Class of Advertisements

D. AP Style Exam (100 Points)

Each participant will complete a 50-question, multiple-choice exam that includes questions regarding AP Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Students specifically should review the 2024-2026 AP Style Manual items listed on the AP Stylebook Study Sheet for 2025 and 2026 provided in extra materials.

E. Communications Component I: Photography (50 Points)

Each participant will rank four photos based on the use of appropriate photography techniques and principles (use of light, focus, composition, angle, news value, etc.).

F. Communications Component II: Graphics Class of Advertisements (50 Points)

Each participant will rank four advertisements. Ranking should be based on the use of design principles: focus point, flow, consistency, balance, appropriateness and grammatical correctness.

IV. SCORING

AP Style Exam Score	100
Photography Class Score	50
Graphics Class Score.....	50

Total Points

Individual	200
Team	600

V. TIEBREAKERS

- A. Team tie breakers will be settled in the following order:
 1. AP Style Exam Score
 2. Graphics Class Score
 3. Photography Class Score
- B. Ties for individual awards shall be broken by substituting the word “individual” wherever the word “team” appears above.

EVENT RULES FOR THE FINALS

All participants MUST be in official FFA dress or will be disqualified.

1. Participants will NOT be able to use any reference materials during this contest. The only acceptable resource is pencil, which must be provided by the participant.
2. All scores from the preliminary competition will be included in final scores. However, only the top three will constitute a final team score.
3. Overall team and individual awards will be given. The top team will be eligible to represent Oklahoma in the 2025 National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE.

III. EVENT FORMAT

A. Team Make-Up

1. The top **seven** teams of up to four members will be eligible to participate in the finals of the Oklahoma FFA Career Development Event in Agricultural Communications.
2. In addition, any participants who are ranked in the top 10 individuals in the preliminaries may compete in the finals even if their teams do not qualify for the finals.

B. Equipment

1. Students must provide their own No. 2 pencils.
2. OSU AGCM will provide all additional materials.

C. Event Schedule

Each contestant will complete the event in the time allotted:

1. Communications Component 1: Photography Class (30 minutes)
2. Communications Component 2: Graphics Class of Advertisements (30 minutes)
3. News Release Writing Critique (30 minutes)

D. Communications Component I: Photography (Rank: 50 Points; Reasons 50 Points)

Each participant will rank four photos based on the use of appropriate photography techniques and principles (use of light, focus, composition, angle, news value, etc.). After ranking the class of photos, each participant will type reasons for the ranking using Microsoft Word. Participants will be scored on the content of their reasons and on their ability to communicate their thoughts in writing. The reasons may be no more than one typed page (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman text, 1-inch margins).

E. Communications Component II: Graphics Class of Advertisements (Rank: 50 Points; Reasons 50 Points)

Each participant will rank four advertisements. Ranking should be based on the use of design principles: focus point, flow, consistency, balance, appropriateness **and grammatical correctness**. After ranking the class each participant will type reasons for the ranking using Microsoft Word. Participants will be scored on the content of their reasons and on their ability to communicate their thoughts in writing. The reasons may be no more than one typed page (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman text, 1-inch margins).

F. News Release Writing Critique (50 Points)

Each participant will read and evaluate a news release and will write a critique of the release based on news writing principles. Participants should NOT rewrite the news release; rather, they will evaluate the release. Participants will be scored on the content of their critiques and on their ability to communicate their thoughts in writing. The critique can be no more than one typed page (double-spaced, 12- point Times New Roman text, 1-inch margins).

IV. SCORING

AP Style Exam from Preliminaries	100
Photography Class from Preliminaries	50
Graphics Class from Preliminaries.....	50
Photography Placing Class	50
Photography Reasons	50
Graphics Placing Class	50
Graphics Reasons.....	50
News Release Critique	50

Total Points

Individual	450
Team	1350

V. TIEBREAKERS

A. Team tie breakers will be settled in the following order:

1. News Release Critique Score
2. Graphics Reasons Score
3. Photography Reasons Score
4. Graphics Class Score
5. Photography Class Score

B. Ties for individual awards shall be broken by substituting the word “individual” wherever the word “team” appears above.

VI. AWARDS

The top five teams and top 10 individuals will be determined and recognized. Awards will be given to the top three teams and individuals during the Oklahoma FFA Convention.

VII. REFERENCES

2024-2026 Associated Press Stylebook and resources provided on the cde.okstate.edu website

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS AND FORMS

Examples and Handouts

Answer Keys (available to teachers via email to shelly.legg@okstate.edu)

Judging Card Scantron Form A



**FERGUSON COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE**



Classroom to Contest

Oklahoma Agricultural Communications CDE

Communications Concepts

What the contest includes

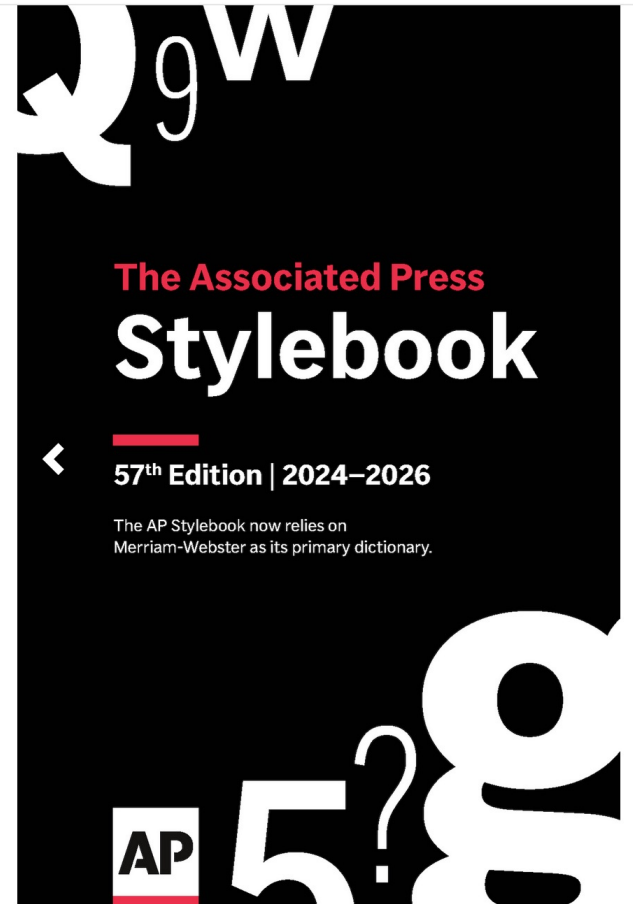
- Proofing for Associated Press style
- Evaluating photographs
- Evaluating graphic design products such as advertisements or business cards
- Evaluating news releases

Why each is valuable

- Learn to pay attention to details
- Learn to follow a particular writing guide/format
- Gain background knowledge for taking better photos for personal or future professional use
- Gain an understanding of how design is used to communicate with an audience



Associated Press Stylebook



- The Associated Press Stylebook is the backbone of all print journalism to provide consistency for media writing.
- The book is a “reference tool” for media writers; however, most will memorize frequently used rules/entries.
- The new study guide (available soon) focuses primarily on these frequently used items and commonly misspelled words, such as barbecue.
- You can request a free copy (print, online or both).
https://www.apstylebook.com/desk_requests



EXAMPLE AP STYLEBOOK ENTRIES

barbecue

The verb refers to the cooking of foods (usually meat) over flame or hot coals. As a noun, can be both the meat cooked in this manner or the fire pit (grill). Not barbeque, Bar-B-Q or BBQ.

abbreviations and acronyms

... IN NUMBERED ADDRESSES: Abbreviate *avenue*, *boulevard* and *street* in numbered addresses: *He lives on Pennsylvania Avenue. He lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.*

See [addresses](#).



Free Teaching Resources

Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications website

FREE ONLINE DIGITAL TEXTBOOK

Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications

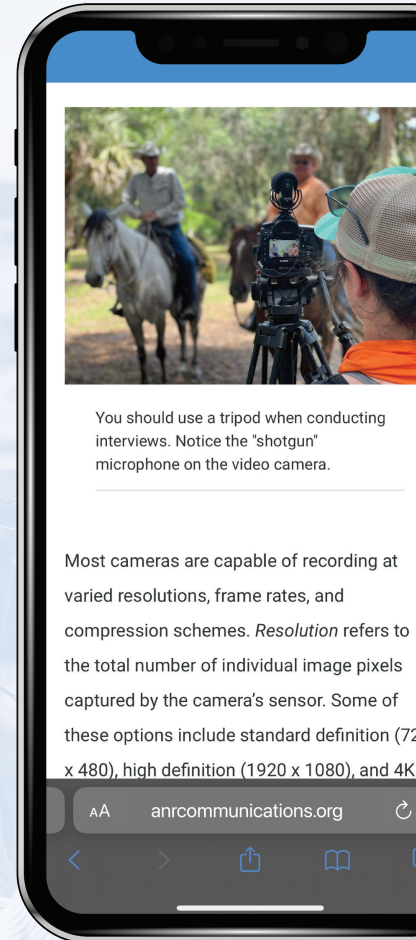
Packed with real-life illustrations and practical applications, Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications helps you become a more effective communicator. Focusing specifically on skills-building and communication concepts, Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications helps you understand the broad methods utilized in communication—whether it be in journalism, through social media, or in other outlets.



SCAN HERE
TO OPEN

The editors and chapter authors, representing universities from across the country, decided to provide this e-book as an online, open-source publication so that it is available to a large audience, to assist those of us who teach agricultural and natural resources communications courses. We want this e-book to have up-to-date, dynamic content.

If you would like to contribute financially to the effort to update the textbook on a regular basis, we ask that you consider donating to this effort using the online donation form at the bottom of the textbook's landing page (<https://bit.ly/3TJRndb>).



You should use a tripod when conducting interviews. Notice the 'shotgun' microphone on the video camera.

Most cameras are capable of recording at varied resolutions, frame rates, and compression schemes. *Resolution* refers to the total number of individual image pixels captured by the camera's sensor. Some of these options include standard definition (720 x 480), high definition (1920 x 1080), and 4K

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Agricultural Communications CDE Example Quiz Questions

Name _____ Chapter _____

For the following items, select the correct use of AP style on **first reference**. Record your answer on your scantron with a pencil.

1. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. The three year old fell from the swing.
 - b. The three-year-old fell from the swing.
 - c. The 3-year-old fell from the swing.
 - d. The 3 year old fell from the swing.

3. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. The child’s curfew is 10:00 pm.
 - b. The child’s curfew is ten p.m.
 - c. The child’s curfew is 10 p.m.
 - d. The child’s curfew is 10 P.M.

2. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. May 23, 2024, is the launch date.
 - b. May 23 2024, is the launch date.
 - c. May 23, 2024 is the launch date.
 - d. May 23 2024 is the launch date.

Please answer the following questions as True (a) or False (b):

4. True (a) or False (b).
An event cannot be a first annual.

NOTE: All exams will have 50 questions. All topics will come from the 2024-26 AP Stylebook Study Guide posted at cde.okstate.edu. Approximately 90% of the items will be multiple-choice questions and will query one or two AP style entries/topics per question. The remaining items will be True/False questions querying one AP style topics/item.

*For example, the first question above is from the **ages** entry specifically, but it encompasses **hyphens** and **numerals**. Similarly, the third question can be referenced in both the **a.m./p.m.** and **times** entries.*



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Sample Ad Class

Class 3 Ads Name _____ Chapter _____ Contestant Number _____

Using the principles of design, rank the ads from best to worst. Record your placing as Class 3 on the scantron.



Ad 1



Ad 2



Ad 3



Ad 4



Using the principles of design, rank the ads from best to worst. Record your placing as Class 3 on the scantron.

Sample Ad Class

Placing

3-4-2-1

Cuts

2-5-2

Build your own

- Canva
- PowerPoint



Ad 1



Ad 2



Ad 3



Ad 4



Sample Photo Class

Class 2 Photos

Using the principles of photography, place the photos from best to worst for a magazine story focused on chicken production.
Record your placing on your scantron as Placing Class 2.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Sample Photo Class

Placing

1-3-4-2

Cuts

2-5-5

Build Your Own

[https://agdivision.okstate.edu/
ag-comm-
marketing/agphoto.html](https://agdivision.okstate.edu/ag-comm-marketing/agphoto.html)

Class 2 Photos

Using the principles of photography, place the photos from best to worst for a magazine story focused on chicken production. Record your placing on your scantron as Placing Class 2.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



CONTESTS

CDEs where OSU AGCM sets up the contest

- Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa
- Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton
- Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Miami
- Murray State College, Tishomingo
- SW District, Chickasha (open to all schools)



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106G Agricultural Hall (beginning in August)

Stillwater, OK 74078

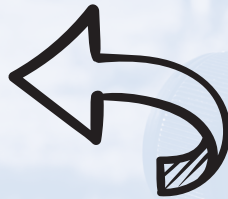
agcm.okstate.edu



FREE ONLINE DIGITAL TEXTBOOK

Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications

Packed with real-life illustrations and practical applications, Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications helps you become a more effective communicator. Focusing specifically on skills-building and communication concepts, Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications helps you understand the broad methods utilized in communication—whether it be in journalism, through social media, or in other outlets.



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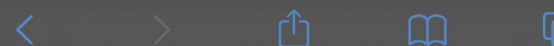
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Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications

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Packed with real-life illustrations and practical applications, [Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications](#) helps you become a more effective communicator.

Focusing specifically on [skills-building](#) and [communication concepts](#), [Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications](#) helps you understand the broad methods utilized in communication – writing, design and layout, video production, social media creation, photography, media relations, policy communication, public relations, and much, much more. This [FREE DIGITAL TEXTBOOK](#) is authored by more than 20 communication experts and professionals from across the country.

Textbook chapters include:

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- Effective Communication, Audience Analysis, and Message Development
- Research Methods in Communications
- Oral Communication

WRITING AND DOCUMENT DESIGN

- Business Communication
- News Media Writing and Opinion Writing
- Document Design

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

- Visual Communication
- Digital Photography and Photographic Editing

VIDEO AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION

- Video and Audio Production
- Writing and Designing for the Web
- Social Media

COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA AND POLICYMAKERS

- Media Relations
- Risk and Crisis Communication
- Policy Communication <NEW>

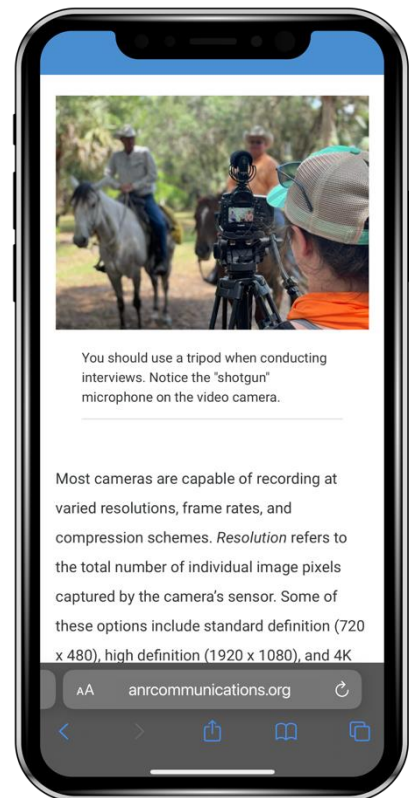
PUTTING IT TOGETHER

- Persuasion and Persuasive Informational and Educational Campaigns
- Special Events
- Communications Campaigns Development
- Personal Branding and Communication
- Future of Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications

Each chapter includes:

- Insights from communication experts
- Auto-scored end-of-chapter questions
- Interactive features
- Ideas to apply what was learned.

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EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



"Understanding your target audience and where to reach them is important!"

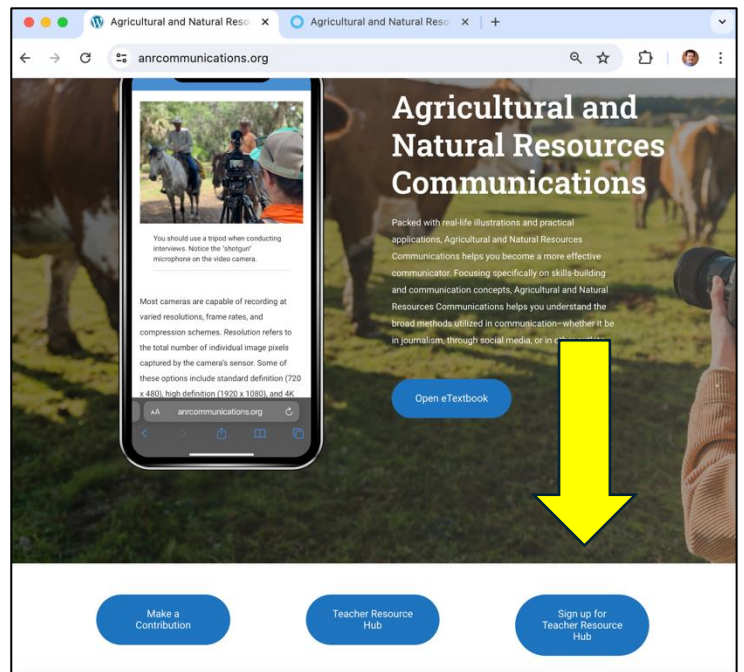
- ANNA RIBBECK

Social Media Strategist and Online Content Creator, LSU AgCenter Communications

EDUCATORS, we have also developed a comprehensive resource – the **TEACHER RESOURCE HUB** – full of **HUNDREDS** of ideas and additional resources to integrate the textbook’s content into your classrooms. To gain access to this valuable instructional resource, scroll to the bottom of the home page (ANRCOMMUNICATIONS.ORG) to sign up for the **FREE TEACHER RESOURCE HUB** (see photo at the right). Once registered, you will be assigned a password to gain access to the following resources for classroom instruction:

- **ACTIVITY AND ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTIONS**
- **CURRICULUM GUIDE**
- **QUIZ BANK FOR EACH CHAPTER**
- **TUTORIALS FOR SPECIFIC ADOBE SOFTWARE PROGRAMS**
- **LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

And did we mention that it’s all **FREE??**



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Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications is an excellent online, open-source publication for agricultural and natural resources communications students and professionals.

Please share the word about **Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications** and the accompanying **Teacher Resource Hub**.

**Agricultural and Natural
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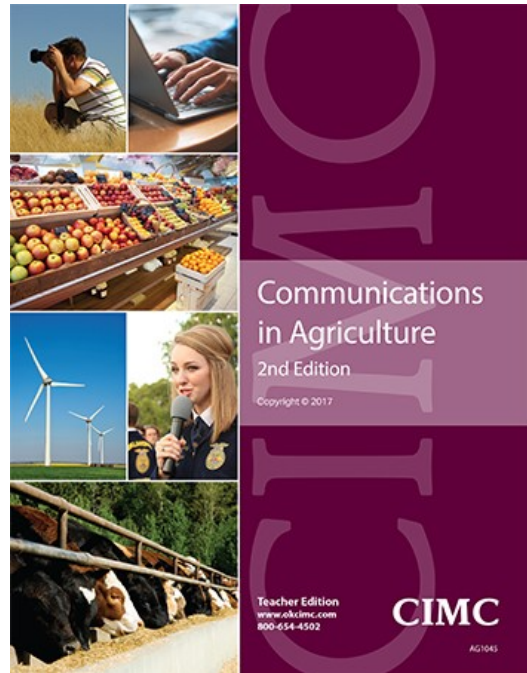


Communications in Agriculture

Communications in Agriculture is designed to introduce students to topics related to promoting agriculture through a variety of media sources. It is a specialized course for students interested in pursuing a career in communications. This product features a full-color student and teacher edition. The Teacher Resource CD, available separately, includes activities and assignments, along with PowerPoints and tests in Word and RTF (for use with ExamView) formats.

Units Include:

- Communication Theory
- Photographic Journalism
- Business Writing and Resumes
- Journalistic Writing
- Broadcasting Media
- Graphic Design
- New Media
- Creating Presentations
- Delivering Presentations



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2

Photographic Journalism



OBJECTIVES

- Define digital camera terminology.
- Determine the elements of good photographs.
- Explain the types of photographs.
- Demonstrate how to crop a photo.
- Recall characteristics of photo captions.
- Describe how audience affects photojournalism and how photography affects the agricultural industry.
- Explain the uses and characteristics of photography in agricultural communications.
- Discuss guidelines for legal and ethical practices in photojournalism.

KEY TERMS

action photos	landscape view
aperture	lighting
candid photos	optical zoom
caption	photo credit
composition	pixels
cropping	point-n-shoot camera
digital zoom	portrait view
exposure	resolution
focal point	Rule of Thirds
formal portraits	single lens reflex (SLR) camera
informal portraits	

Camera technology has changed dramatically in the last decade. However, one thing remains constant: the impact and importance of the visual image when telling a story. Photographic journalism is an old concept, but the elements and need for good photographs continues to hold true. A photojournalist may work directly for news sources as a full-time employee as a freelancer selling photographs to a variety of print media. Whatever the job may be, photos play an important role in drawing interest to a story. This unit will focus on basic principles of photography along with ethical practices a photojournalist must consider.

Digital Camera Terminology

When an electrical engineer working for the Eastman Kodak Company created the first digital camera in 1975, he could not have imagined how quickly the invention would develop into a product that many consumers now use on a regular basis. While both film and digital cameras use light to create photographs, the digital camera saves the image as **pixels**, which are the tiny squares of a digital photo. Memory cards, rather than film, record the images. Digital cameras are differentiated by how many pixels the camera records in a square inch, which is known as **resolution**. The higher the resolution, the more pixels the camera records per inch, which allows the image to stay crisp when enlarged to jumbo sizes.

Photographers should shoot photos with a resolution great enough that photos will appear sharp and clear in the publication for which they are intended. Resolution is typically noted as pixels per inch (ppi) or dots per inch (dpi). Magazines require photos with a higher dpi than newspapers, and newspapers require a larger dip than Web publications. The higher the pixel dimensions of a photo, the larger the image files, which require more storage space. With technology today, storage space is easy to come by. However, when sending photos electronically, minimizing the file size based on use is important.

Optimal Resolution

Magazine	300 dpi
Newspaper	150 dpi
Web	72 dpi

Whether film or digital, a camera is nothing more than a lightbox, and a captured image is dependent upon several variables that let light hit the film strip or digital sensor. There are three elements that dictate how light enters the camera. These three elements create the photographic light triangle. The sides of the triangle include ISO, aperture and shutter speed. A balance of these three sides of the triangle indicates a correct or optimum **exposure**.

In digital photography, ISO is the sensitivity of the camera sensor to light. The higher the ISO number, the more sensitive the sensor is to light. Bryan Peterson in his book *Understanding*

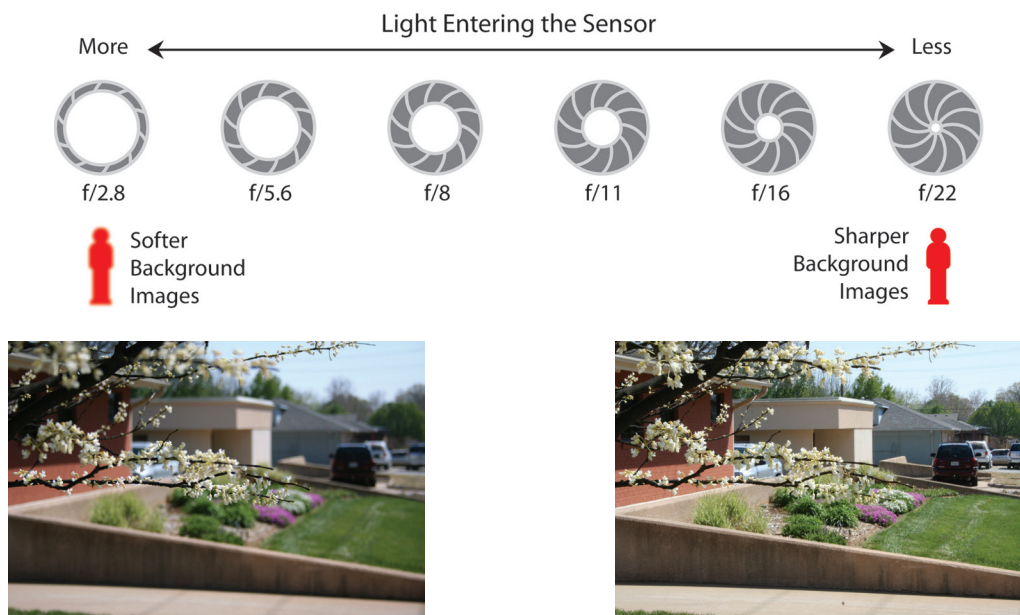
Exposure describes ISO using worker bees as an analogy. If you have an ISO of 100, imagine 100 worker bees capturing light. If we use an ISO of 200, we would have 200 worker bees capturing the same light, which means we could collect the same light in half the time as 100 ISO.

Aperture is the size of the opening inside the lens attached to the camera. The aperture opening in a lens is describe as an f-stop. The f-stop value is a fraction, which describes the diameter of the aperture. The good news is that the math behind figuring out this opening size isn't as critical as knowing how the size of the opening dictates. Typically, the larger the opening, the less the area of sharpness or focus in a photo. This is call a shallow depth of field. A narrow aperture opening would result in deep depth of field or area of focus.

Shutter speed controls how long the light coming through the lens hits the digital sensor. You can think of the shutter like a blind on a window. When the blind opens, light enters a room through the window. When the shutter opens, light enters the camera through the aperture and hits the sensor. Shutter speed is important when capturing different types of images. As an example, a fast shutter speed is needed to stop action such as shooting sports photography. A slow shutter speed would be necessary to capture motion such as water rolling over rocks or streaming car lights.

There are some other important parts of a digital camera:

- A glass or plastic lens captures an image by gathering light and focusing a subject.
- A body provides the light-proof housing for the camera.
- A viewfinder can be either through a frame or a lens that allows the photographer to see the subject of the photograph. Digital cameras also have a video screen to see the image before it is taken and to review the image after it is recorded.



Just as with film cameras, digital cameras come in two basic types: point-n-shoot and single lens reflex (SLR). A **point-n-shoot camera** provides the user with the simplest way to capture a photograph. This type of camera has a built-in lens, fixed aperture and automatic flash. This camera typically determines the correct exposure and focus automatically as it records an image. More advanced versions have specialty settings to allow the user to take different types of photos. As an example, the photographer may be able to take a close-up photo using the macro setting on a camera. Many also allow the photographer to zoom in one of two ways, optically and digitally.

Optical zoom is superior to digital zoom because it allows the photographer to maintain picture quality. When using an optical zoom, the photographer adjusts the lens to magnify or expand the area in the picture, but the resolution (number of pixels) and, therefore, the picture quality, remain the same. The range of the optical zoom is indicated by a magnification number such as 3X or 4X.

A **digital zoom** enlarges the subject by magnifying the center of a picture. As a result, the center of the picture appears larger, but image quality is reduced. Through digital zoom software, the camera adds pixels to create the larger image. In effect, it crops, or edits, the picture while it is still in the camera and reduces the picture's resolution. A digital zoom adds convenience, but it limits the ability to enlarge a picture because of the lower image resolution. If available, optical zoom is the best option to use.

An **SLR camera** (so named because the same lens is used to view and take the photo) has interchangeable lenses (normal, close-up, telephoto or zoom, wide angle, etc.) and allows the user to have more control of the recorded image. To take full advantage of either camera type, the camera user should review the owner's manual before taking any photographs.

Elements of Good Photographs

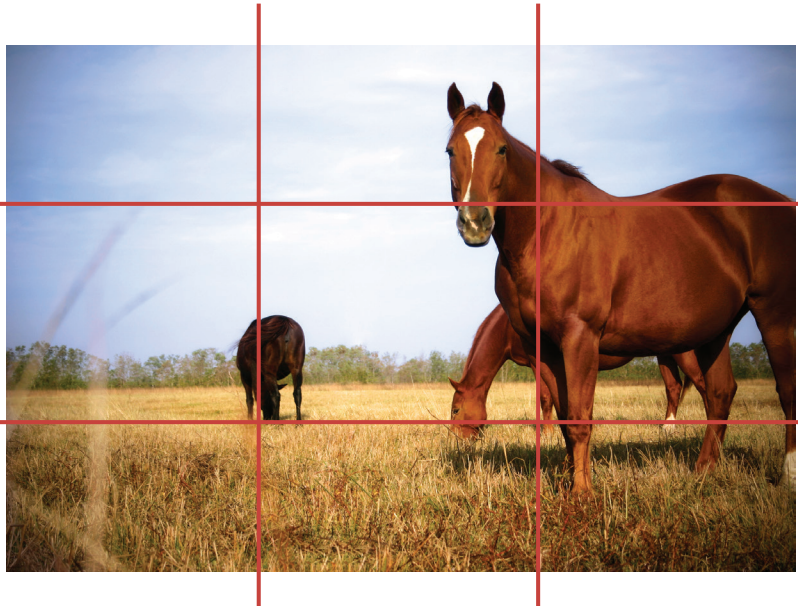
Photos preserve memories — great friends, great places and great times. Throughout the world, thousands of photographers take billions of photos of everyday events and special subjects. Are they all good photos? Absolutely not! In fact, only a tiny percentage of those photos are good. So, what characteristics do the "good" photos share?

First and foremost, a good photo is in focus — the image is clear and sharp. Out-of-focus photos look unprofessional. Getting a proper focus occurs by focusing the camera correctly and by holding the camera steady while pushing the shutter release button to take a photo.

Next, a good photo is well composed so the subject, also known as the **focal point**, attracts attention. **Composition** describes the arrangement of objects in the photo. In a well-composed photo, the subject will fill the frame so the photo does not have empty, useless space. Good photographs will have simple, uncluttered backgrounds when possible. Taking the photo from an unusual angle may also improve the final product.

A helpful concept for improving composition is the **Rule of Thirds**. According to this guideline, the brain prefers images where the main subject is slightly off-center.

Therefore, the photographer should position the subject inside the edge of the frame by approximately one-third. If the frame is divided into thirds both horizontally and vertically (imagine a tic-tac-toe grid), the points where the lines intersect are good positions for the subject of the photo. The photographer should avoid placing the subject in the exact center, at the very top or bottom, or in the corner. By using the Rule of Thirds, a beginning photographer can learn to create nicely balanced pictures.



Another important compositional technique is to move the horizon line around in a photo. Most amateur photographers will shoot a photograph with the horizon line directly in the middle of the photo. It is often better to move the horizon line up or down in the photo depending on whether the sky or foreground is most interesting.

The subject or event being photographed should be appealing and interesting for the photo to be considered good. Good photos also convey or suggest emotion through their content, and they provide information for the target audience of an image.

Some Photo Tips

- Show action
- Get close to the subject
- Tell a story
- Keep subjects in proportion
- Don't let subjects "walk" out of the photo
- Be creative with angles and framing (using other objects in a photo to surround or frame the subject)

A good photo will have proper exposure or optimal lighting. Proper exposure ensures the photos are neither too light nor too dark. In some cases, this will mean using a flash, which usually provides front lighting. **Lighting** refers to the direction of the light in relation to the photo's subject. Other options are back lighting (creating a silhouette), side lighting, or top lighting for varying effects.

Too Dark



Too Light



Just Right



Free sample provided by CIMC

800.654.4502

store.okcimc.com

Types of Photographs

Quality photographs can be important in communicating your message to an audience. They can be either **portrait view** (vertical) or **landscape view** (horizontal). To keep subjects interesting, photographers take a wide variety of images: formal portraits, informal or environmental portraits, still-life photos, action photos and candid photos.

Formal portraits are taken in a photography studio, often in front of a portrait backdrop. The subjects are posed and look directly at the camera. These photos most frequently are for personal use, such as school pictures or professional headshots.

Informal portraits, or environmental portraits, also have the subject look toward the camera. The difference, however, lies in the surroundings. In an environmental portrait, the subject is photographed in a natural setting, such as her office, his garden, or another scenic location. These images are useful for profile stories about agricultural producers, companies and organizations.

Photos of subjects such as crops, scenic landscapes, antiques, architectural details, etc. create **still-life** photos. Other still-life examples might be photos of shadows, footprints or equipment. These artistic photos can be used in a variety of ways.

Think action photos only occur in sports? Think again. Action in agriculture can occur in the field as combines empty golden grain into a waiting semi-truck or when ranchers vaccinate and brand cattle. **Action photos** draw readers and viewers into a story because of the emotion they often show.

Candid photos are those in which the subjects are not posed. News photos most often fall into this category. Subjects in candid photos are not looking at the camera and may not be aware they are being photographed. These photos also can provide an honest look at the subjects of a news or feature story.

Photograph Cropping

Although photographers work to compose the perfect photo, they often must crop a photo before it is published. **Cropping** trims part of the original photo, giving it a new top, bottom and/or sides. Cropping also eliminates unwanted clutter or background, resulting in attention to the subject or area of emphasis.

To crop a photo, an individual determines the placement of the subject using the Rule of Thirds. Then, two edges of the finished print are chosen and the remaining two are determined by the dimensions of the required finished print, such as a 4 x 6 or 5 x 7. When cropping, square images should be avoided. Digital photos are cropped in photo-editing software, such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Lightroom. Other adjustments can be made to an image using these software programs much like adjustments in film processing can be made in a dark room.

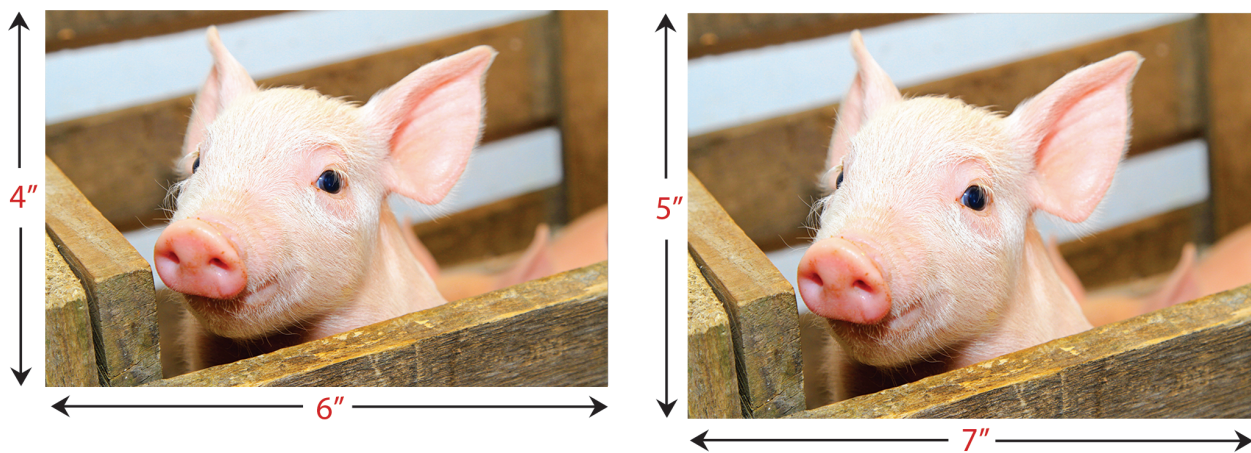


Photo Captions

If a photo is published in a newspaper or magazine, it needs a **caption**, or label, to provide additional information for the reader. After headlines, photo captions are the most often read information in a publication. As such, captions demand tight writing that is easy to read and informative. Captions should not duplicate material in the accompanying story, but they should identify who is pictured in a photo and/or details about where a photo was taken. The caption should also include a **photo credit** indicating who shot the picture.

Many newspapers use a caption style in which the first sentence is written in the present tense and following sentences are written in past tense. The first sentence explains what is occurring in the photo, and the following sentences provide context and background. Although brief, captions are written with complete sentences, including articles and conjunctions.

Additional Guidelines for Writing Captions

- Identify people left to right or clockwise.
- Identify what is happening in the photo or graphic without trite phrases such as "pictured above," "looks on" and "is shown."
- Use present tense, active voice verbs when possible.
- Include pertinent details not found in the story.
- Write the caption to stand alone so reading the story is not required.
- Avoid editorializing and making judgments. Stick to the facts.
- Check the caption against the finished photo. People or objects may have been cropped out of the photo.
- Check spelling, punctuation and grammar in captions.



Students attending FFA Alumni Leadership Camp reflect on their day during a small group session. FFA Alumni Leadership Camp was established in 1973.

Ag Ed Division Photo

Audience and the Agriculture Industry

Agricultural photography reaches a diverse audience. Within this audience are those who have direct experience in agriculture but also included are those with no agricultural experience. A photographer's knowledge of the audience for specific photos will direct the type of photos he or she captures, as well as the caption written for each published photo.

Photography plays an important role in agriculture, especially in the purebred livestock industry. Breeders across the world rely on photos to showcase their animals in marketing and sales publications. Additionally, photos provide information to agricultural producers concerning new equipment and related products, as well as examples of diseases and pests.

For non-agriculturalists, photos depicting agricultural practices are very important in giving a visual to the production process. Many consumers do not understand where their food comes from today. A photograph can be very impactful in sharing the story of agriculture.

Photography in Ag Communications

Photos are an important element in agricultural communications because they give the reader or viewer a visual image of the story. These images also help convey content and meaning while making a publication more pleasing to the eye. Photographs are used when realism is the goal. A photograph may show an item in its natural setting or in a studio. A series of photos can show the steps in a process.

One important characteristic of photography in agriculture is timeliness. Harvesting photos can be taken only during the harvest season. The photographer must decide what images he or she will need and prepare to capture those images during that season. For example, the harvesting photos taken this year may be used in pre-harvest news next year.

Another critical element in photography is the time of day for taking photos. The best, most appealing light appears at daybreak and sunset, often referred to as the golden hours. The harshest light occurs at midday, providing shadows and other challenges to the photographer.

Legal and Ethical Practices

Photographers should practice ethical standards when taking and publishing photographs. Because a photojournalist's job is to take pictures that capture the viewer's attention, he or she often takes pictures of people in emotional, embarrassing or revealing situations. In general, a photographer should get permission from anyone who appears in a photo.

Legal guidelines. Contrary to popular belief, there is no "right to privacy" guaranteed to American citizens in the United States Constitution. There are, however, commonly recognized rights or principles of privacy that have resulted from years of court cases concerning the photographer's rights versus the rights of the subject. The following provides legal guidelines for photojournalists regarding invasion of privacy.

Taking photographs on private property. In cases where photographers have entered homes using false identities, taking pictures secretly, the courts have ruled in favor of the individuals being photographed. Photographers, however, frequently enter private property when covering spot news.

Using a photograph of a person to sell a product without his/her permission. Publishing someone's photograph in a magazine or newspaper is legal without obtaining permission from the subject, as long as the picture is obtained ethically. Using a person's picture to sell a product without his permission, however, is not legal. To sell a picture for advertising purposes, the photographer must get written permission from the subject.

Harassment courts. These courts have placed restrictions on some photographers' access to their subjects when they were judged to be overly intrusive into the lives of the people being photographed.

Using a photograph to give a false or negative impression of the person. Courts have ruled in favor of individuals who sued after their photograph was used in a way that they felt was unfair, false or misleading.

Taking photographs in a public place. A photographer can generally take pictures in any public place or on private property with permission. There are restrictions, however. Photographs, even taken in public places, should not embarrass or make a joke of a private person. A photographer may take pictures of children in schools and public parks, unless the picture could be considered



Thinkstock Photo

embarrassing or demeaning. For example, in the case of special needs children, the parents may consider the photos too embarrassing or insensitive to the child. The photographer should, in this case, get permission from the parent or legal guardian before publishing the photo. **IMPORTANT:** Because newspapers, magazines and Web sites can be a source of information for child predators, never reveal detailed personal information about a child in a caption or story without permission from a parent or guardian.

Ethical practices. Beyond legal considerations, photojournalists have a responsibility to make ethical decisions when choosing to photograph subjects and events. Although there are no strict rules for making these decisions, the photojournalist should be sensitive to human suffering and be careful not to create fraudulent photographs.

Posing photographs. A photojournalist should never pass off a posed photograph as being candid, especially a news photograph.

Distorting a photograph. A photojournalist should not distort a photograph to achieve a certain goal that conveys a personal bias. Computer software, which allows significant manipulation with digital photos, has raised ethical concerns for news photography. The National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) has stated:

"... it is wrong to alter the content of a photograph in any way that deceives the public ... altering the editorial content of a photograph, in any degree, is a breach of the ethical standards recognized by the NPPA."

Taking photographs of tragedies. The photojournalist should be sensitive to those who are undergoing a tragic situation. He or she should keep a distance when people are grieving or suffering. To avoid being intrusive, a telephoto lens may be used.

Livestock photography. Many photographers in the agricultural industry shoot photos of sale animals for association web sites or sale catalogs. Photographers should not use computer software to digitally enhance or alter the appearance of an animal, misleading a potential buyer.

Unit Summary

Photography is a useful skill for today's agricultural journalists and communicators. Beginning photographers learn about digital cameras and the characteristics of good photographs. Agricultural photographers take different types of photos: formal portraits, informal or environmental portraits, still-life, action and candid. After photos are taken, they must be cropped, or edited, for use in publications, and accompanying captions must be written. As agricultural photographers capture the essence of rural life, agricultural business and those involved in producing America's food and fiber, they should act in an ethical and legal manner.

Unit Review

1. What is the difference between a point-and-shoot and SLR camera?
2. Name the elements of a good photograph.
3. Explain the Rule of Thirds.
4. What are the different types of photographs?
5. Why are photo captions important?
6. How does photography impact understanding of agriculture?
7. What are some unethical practices photographers should avoid?

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Agricultural Communications CDE Example Quiz Questions

Name _____ Chapter _____

For the following items, select the correct use of AP style on **first reference**. Record your answer on your scantron with a pencil.

1. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. The three year old fell from the swing.
 - b. The three-year-old fell from the swing.
 - c. The 3-year-old fell from the swing.
 - d. The 3 year old fell from the swing.
2. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. May 23, 2024, is the launch date.
 - b. May 23 2024, is the launch date.
 - c. May 23, 2024 is the launch date.
 - d. May 23 2024 is the launch date.
3. Choose the correct use of AP style.
 - a. The child's curfew is 10:00 pm.
 - b. The child's curfew is ten p.m.
 - c. The child's curfew is 10 p.m.
 - d. The child's curfew is 10 P.M.

Please answer the following questions as True (a) or False (b):

4. True (a) or False (b).
An event cannot be a first annual.

NOTE: All exams will have 50 questions. All topics will come from the 2024-26 AP Stylebook Study Guide posted at cde.okstate.edu. Approximately 90% of the items will be multiple-choice questions and will query one or two AP style entries/topics per question. The remaining items will be True/False questions querying one AP style topics/item.

*For example, the first question above is from the **ages** entry specifically, but it encompasses **hyphens** and **numerals**. Similarly, the third question can be referenced in both the **a.m./p.m.** and **times** entries.*

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Up to two 3- or 4-member teams or individuals (8 students max)

IMPORTANT NOTE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the agricultural communications career development event is to showcase agricultural communications careers to as many FFA members as possible. Public communications about agricultural products, practices and policies are essential to the future of agriculture. Students have a bright future in the job market when equipped with strong communication skills, teamwork skills, and the ability to analyze a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the industry of agriculture.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. Identify agricultural communications best practices, standards and ethics.
2. Apply selected Associated Press style guidelines.
3. Analyze and evaluate visual and written media.
4. Demonstrate ability to write clearly and concisely.

III. EVENT RULES

1. **FFA official dress is NOT REQUIRED.**
2. Participants will NOT be able to use any reference materials during this contest. The only acceptable resource is a No. 2 pencil with which the participant will record his/her answers on the Scansheet for JudgingCard.com or on a similar provided scantron.
3. Up to eight FFA members may participate in the competition. The three highest individual scores on a team will constitute a team score (low individual score on a team will be dropped).

IV. EVENT FORMAT

A. Team Make-Up

Each chapter may enter up to two teams consisting of no more than four FFA members each.

B. Equipment

1. Participants will use a Scansheet for use with JudgingCard.com to record their responses or on a similar provided scantron.
2. Each participant must have their own No. 2 pencil.

C. Event Schedule

Each contestant shall have 45 minutes to complete the contest materials, which include the following:

1. AP Style Exam
2. Communications Component 1: Photography
3. Communications Component 2: Graphics Class of Advertisements

D. AP Style Exam (100 Points)

Each participant will complete a 50-question, multiple-choice exam that includes questions regarding AP Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. **Students specifically should review the 2024-2026 AP Style Manual items listed on the AP Stylebook Study Sheet for 2025 and 2026 provided in extra materials at cde.okstate.edu.**

E. Communications Component I: Photography (50 Points)

Each participant will rank four photos based on the use of appropriate photography techniques and principles (use of light, focus, composition, angle, news value, etc.).

F. Communications Component II: Graphics Class of Advertisements (50 Points)

Each participant will rank four advertisements. Ranking should be based on the use of design principles: focus point, flow, consistency, balance, appropriateness and grammatical correctness.

V. SCORING

AP Style Exam Score	100
Photography Class Score	50
Graphics Class Score.....	50

Total Points

Individual	200
Team	600

VI. TIEBREAKERS

A. Team tie breakers will be settled in the following order:

1. AP Style Exam Score
2. Graphics Class Score
3. Photography Class Score

B. Ties for individual awards shall be broken by substituting the word “individual” wherever the word “team” appears above.

VII. AWARDS

To be determined by the hosts.

VIII. REFERENCES

2024-2026 Associated Press Stylebook and resources provided on the cde.okstate.edu website

Study Sheet for The Associated Press Stylebook 2024-2026

Stylebook A-Z

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. abbreviations and acronyms | 27. convention | 52. numerals |
| 2. academic degrees | 28. county | 53. plurals |
| 3. academic departments | 29. courtesy titles | 54. possessive |
| 4. accept, except | 30. datelines | 55. post office |
| 5. addresses | 31. dates | 56. principal, principle |
| 6. affect, effect | 32. days of the week | 57. reign, rein |
| 7. ages | 33. designated days, weeks, and months | 58. sport utility vehicles |
| 8. all-terrain vehicles | 34. dimensions | 59. state |
| 9. among, between | 35. directions and regions | 60. state names |
| 10. amount, number | 36. doctor | 61. superintendent |
| 11. a.m., p.m. | 37. dollars | 62. television program titles |
| 12. animals | 38. Earth | 63. temperatures |
| 13. annual | 39. email | 64. than, then |
| 14. board | 40. engine, motor | 65. their, there, they're |
| 15. building | 41. farmers market | 66. time of day |
| 16. bus, buses | 42. fewer, less | 67. times |
| 17. Canada goose | 43. french fries | 68. time sequences |
| 18. capital Capitol | 44. gender-neutral language | 69. titles |
| 19. capitalization | 45. judgement | 70. T-shirt |
| 20. cellphone | 46. junior, senior | 71. turnpike |
| 21. cents | 47. miles per gallon | 72. Unites States |
| 22. child care | 48. months | 73. weights |
| 23. chile, chiles, chili | 49. names | 74. West, Western, west, western |
| 24. coast | 50. National FFA Organization | 75. who's, whose |
| 25. company, companies | 51. no. | 76. who, whom |
| 26. complement, compliment | | 77. years |

Criminal Justice

- 78. courthouse
- 79. youth, youths

Technology

- 80. app, platform, service, site
- 81. Bluetooth
- 82. hot spot
- 83. internet
- 84. login, logon, logoff
- 85. Wi-Fi

Religion

- 86. Christmas, Christmas Day
- 87. Christmas tree
- 88. Church

Punctuation

- 89. apostrophe
- 90. colon
- 91. comma
- 92. dash
- 93. hyphen
- 94. periods
- 95. question mark
- 96. quotation marks
- 97. semicolon