

I place this class of color wheat-harvesting photos 4-1-3-2.

I began the class with Photo 4, which shows a close-up of a John Deere combine as it harvests wheat. This photo offers the best composition and color of any photo in the class. The low and non-perpendicular angle as well as the rising dust emphasize the action in the wheat field. It has crisp focus, and the second combine adds a sense of realism to the photo. I grant the white guide, while it is part of the header, is distracting as the point at which it attaches to the header is not visible in the photo. Nonetheless, Photo 4 is the most closely matches ideal in the class. I'll be the first to admit that Photo 1 has a strong, non-perpendicular angle similar to Photo 4 and shows more of the combine; however, the color is too dark and the photographer could have improved the image by selecting a lower angle from which to shoot.

In analyzing my middle pair, Photo 1 is superior to Photo 3. In Photo 1, the light is coming from an appropriate angle to illustrate the time of day and the wider angle shows the entire combine and the action as it takes place in the field. Although Photo 3 has a unique, head-on perspective of the combine, I placed this photo third because the shadow of the photographer at the bottom of the image is distracting.

Moving to the final photos, I placed Photo 3 over Photo 2 in a tight bottom pair. Photo 3 has a cleaner focus than Photo 2 and could be cropped to eliminate distractions. I acknowledge the color in Photo 2 is superior to Photo 3, but I criticize Photo 2 and place it last because of the highly distracting head of wheat that blocks the view of combine, which is the subject of the image.

## Example Press Release Critique

The press release titled “Oklahoma State Block and Bridle Bonanza Cattle Show” has some correct pieces, but there are also many incorrect pieces. The correct pieces are primarily found in the formatting of the release, whereas the headline, mechanics and content have errors.

The correct pieces include a correct dateline, spacing and symbols to signify the end of the press release. The release also contains appropriate contact information. However, a logo or letterhead should be added as well as ‘FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE’ and the date.

The headline for this press release includes a subject but is lacking a verb; thus, it does not indicate whether the event will happen or has happened.

Mechanics and content are where this press release lacks the most. While the lead addresses the who and what, the nutgraf does not directly follow the lead to answer the other journalistic questions. The date in the lead is also improperly formatted.

The release does not follow the inverted pyramid structure, as the second paragraph is a direct quote instead of the nutgraf. The boilerplate is also not in the right place. It is the fourth paragraph instead of the last.

Errors with the direct quote go beyond the order in the release. The attribution is in the wrong place, the source’s title is not capitalized correctly and the punctuation for the quote is incorrect.

The release also has AP Style, grammar and spelling mistakes throughout the press release. Other specific errors include 4-H written as Four-H, listing CASNR and OYE abbreviations when not needed, incorrect capitalization of titles of the judges, misspelling College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, failing to capitalize club in the OSU Block and Bridle Club reference in the fourth paragraph and changing tenses throughout the release.

## **OSU Agricultural Communications CDE** **Press Release Critique Guidelines**

*For the press release critique section of the AGCM CDE, participants read and evaluate a news release to a critique of the release based on news writing principles. Participants are scored on the content of their critiques and on their ability to communicate their thoughts in writing.*

- The critique may be no more than one typed page (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman text, 1-inch margins).
- The press release critique should address all of the areas in boldface below.
  - o To ensure a critique flows well, members should use separate paragraphs to address each of the areas. A paragraph that discusses one format issue, one mechanic issue and one content issue is difficult for readers to comprehend.
- Members should strive to use “key terms” discussed below to demonstrate they have a thorough understanding of the topic.
- Successful critique writers not only make claims about what is good or bad about the press release, but also they provide specific examples from the release that demonstrate or back up the claim.

### **Format**

- Does the press release include letterhead information (logo, etc.) for the company releasing the information?
- Does the press release contain contact information in the body text and for media members who receive the release?
- Does the release include details about when the information can be used, for example: “For Immediate Release” or at a specified release date?
- Does the press release include page slugs? (-more-, ###, -30-, etc.)
- Does the press release include dateline? Is the dateline formatted correctly?
- Is the text double-spaced?

### **Headline**

- Does the headline summarize the news aspect of the press release?
- Does the headline include a subject and verb?
- Is the headline written in future tense for upcoming events and present tense for things that have already happened? (Headlines should not be written in past tense.)

### **Mechanics**

- Does the press release exhibit correct AP style, grammar, spelling and punctuation?

## Content

- Does the press release content follow the keys to journalistic writing?
  - Are the paragraphs the correct length? (One thought per paragraph. Most paragraphs are one to three sentences long.)
  - Are the sentences short? (Sentences should average 16 words. But sentence length should vary so it isn't choppy or boring.)
  - Do the sentences use active voice (vs. passive voice)?
  - Does the writer use short, common words (8<sup>th</sup>-grade reading level)
  - Is the press release objective?
  - Does the release follow the inverted pyramid format?
- Are the 5Ws and H answered clearly in the press release?
- Is the press release lead written well?
  - Well-written leads focus on the "who" and "what." (The "when," "where" and "why" should be included in the second and subsequent paragraphs according to the inverted pyramid format.)
  - Leads should summarize the news.
  - Leads should contain fewer than 30 words.
- Are one or more direct quotations included? Quotations can add context, explain the impact and validate press releases. Quotes from two sources are preferred for most press releases.
  - Does the first quote appear no later than the third paragraph of the story?
  - Are the quotes from credible sources?
  - Are direct quotes written in separate paragraphs?
- Is a "boilerplate" for the company included as the final paragraph? A boilerplate is an overview paragraph generally used to complete every release from the company.

Contact:

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### Oklahoma State Block and Bridle Bonanza Cattle Show

STILLWATER, Okla. – Oklahoma State Block and Bridle members are set to host the annual Bonanza Cattle Show February 20th – 21st at the Payne County Expo Center.

“Bonanza has a long history of being the highlight event for the Block and Bridle club each year.” “It serves as the main fundraiser for the club and allows the Block and Bridle membership to use their experience showing livestock to put on a show for 4-H and FFA members from Oklahoma and surrounding states.” Bonanza Co-Chair, Chandler Steele says.

The annual event is one that youth exhibitors look forward to each and every year. Block and Bridle members expect 150 cattle and over 75 exhibitors from Oklahoma and neighboring states to attend the show. With the show season getting into full swing, the Bonanza provides Four-H and FFA members the opportunity to brush up their skills before shows such as the Oklahoma Youth Expo (OYE). It is also an opportunity for collegiate members of Block and Bridle to give back to the youth and the livestock show industry.

The National Block and Bridal Club is a collegiate organization for students interested in animal agriculture. The OSU Block and Bridle club has been heavily involved within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CASNR). Promoting agriculture and giving back to the community and youth is important to the club’s members.

Cattle can arrive beginning Feb. 20 at 2 p.m.. Pre-entry is \$35 per head and showmanship entry is \$5 per exhibitor. Marcus Arnold, Assistant Professor at Butler Community College and Tyler Stutsman, past member of the Iowa Livestock Judging Team, will be the judging the show.

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2019 OSU Agricultural Communications CDEs  
Study Sheet for *The Associated Press Stylebook 2018*

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|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. abbreviations and acronyms   | 34. corporation               | 72. nationwide                               |
| 2. academic degrees   | 35. county                    | 73. No.                                      |
| 3. academic departments   | 36. courtesy titles           | 74. nonprofit                                |
| 4. accept, except   | 37. dates                     | 75. numerals                                 |
| 5. addresses  | 38. days of the week          | 76. OK                                       |
| 6. affect, effect   | 39. decades                   | 77. part time, part-time                     |
| 7. afterward  | 40. dimensions                | 78. percent                                  |
| 8. ages   | 41. doctor                    | 79. pickup, pick up                          |
| 9. all-terrain vehicle  | 42. dollars                   | 80. plurals                                  |
| 10. alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae  | 43. doughnut                  | 81. possessives                              |
| 11. among, between  | 44. email                     | 82. prefixes                                 |
| 12. a.m., p.m.  | 45. ensure, insure, assure    | 83. president                                |
| 13. animals, especially breed names   | 46. essential clauses         | 84. principal, principle                     |
| 14. annual  | 47. essential phrases         | 85. seasons                                  |
| 15. association   | 48. every day, everyday       | 86. state                                    |
| 16. ATM   | 49. farmworker                | 87. state names                              |
| 17. backward  | 50. faze, phase               | 88. teen, teenager, teenage                  |
| 18. board of directors, board of trustees (lowercase except when part of a proper noun) | 51. fewer, less               | 89. telephone numbers                        |
| 19. building  | 52. firsthand                 | 90. temperatures                             |
| 20. bus, buses  | 53. foot-and-mouth disease    | 91. that, which                              |
| 21. capital, Capitol  | 54. fractions                 | 92. their, there, they're                    |
| 22. capitalization  | 55. full time, full-time      | 93. times                                    |
| 23. cellphone   | 56. fundraising, fundraiser   | 94. titles                                   |
| 24. Christmas   | 57. governor                  | 95. toward                                   |
| 25. citywide  | 58. grade, grader             | 96. T-shirt                                  |
| 26. co-   | 59. highway designations      | 97. U.S.                                     |
| 27. committee   | 60. homemade                  | 98. vice president                           |
| 28. company, companies  | 61. horse races               | 99. website                                  |
| 29. complementary, complimentary  | 62. internet                  | 100. weights                                 |
| 30. composition titles  | 63. it's, its                 | 101. years                                   |
| 31. contractions  | 64. judgment                  | 102. youth                                   |
| 32. convention  | 65. lake                      | 103. punctuation section topics (p. 426-437) |
| 33. cooperate, cooperative  | 66. Lyme disease              | a. apostrophe                                |
|   | 67. midnight                  | b. colon                                     |
|   | 68. months                    | c. comma                                     |
|   | 69. mpg                       | d. dash                                      |
|   | 70. mph                       | e. hyphen                                    |
|   | 71. National FFA Organization | f. periods                                   |
|   |                               | g. question mark                             |
|   |                               | h. quotation marks                           |
|   |                               | i. semicolon                                 |

Contestant #

I place this class of Grissoms John Deere advertisements 1-4-2-3.

In my top pair of ads, I placed Design 1 over Design 4 because it has a distinct dominant element (the tractor with baler), uses one san serif font family, and has the company logo is at the bottom right. I grant Design 4 has a tighter crop on the photo; however, the contact information text is difficult to read and a less readable font is used in the headline.

In my middle pair, I placed Design 4 above Design 2. In Design 4, the elements are placed in the correct part of advertisement and the photo provides a strong focal point to the ad. I grant the tractor in the photo in Design 2 has room to show motion, but the overall layout makes the content difficult to follow and challenging to read.

In my final pair of ads, I placed Design 2 over Design 3. While Design 2 has multiple issues, the photo is clear and is placed correctly. Although I grant the text in Design 3 is easier to read, Design 3 is an easy bottom as the photo is flipped, causing the John Deere on the tractor to be backward.

For these reasons, I place this class of advertisements 1-4-2-3.

Contestant #

I place these dairy cattle photos 2-3-1-4.

In my top pair of photos, I placed Photo 2 over Photo 3 because it better uses the light, lines and angles. Photo 2 provides a unique perspective of the dairy calf with the fence used as a guide into the photo and toward the calf. This photo demonstrates the rule of thirds because the focal point is not in the center of the photo. Although I grant Photo 3 has better contrasts in colors, Photo 2 has fewer distracting elements around the calf.

Moving to my middle pair, I placed Photo 3 over Photo 1 because an animal is used in Photo 3 and the lighting provides for better coloring of the sky, grass and calf. Photo 1 is not as sharp when it comes to focal point and a power line is visible in the upper left corner of the photo; however, I do grant Photo 1 uses the rule of thirds better than Photo 3, which has the calf in the center of the frame.

In my final pair, I placed Photo 1 over Photo 4 because Photo 1 has fewer distracting elements than Photo 4. Photo 1 uses the rule of thirds to represent the dairy farm facilities. I do grant, however, Photo 4, has better lighting, but the angle of the calf head and presence of the ear of another calf distracts from the focal point and moves it to the bottom of the set.

For these reasons, I place this class of dairy cattle photos 2-3-1-4.