



**Writing for the Mass Media
Spring**

Test III—Writing Three Original Articles/Producing Your Own Newspaper!

Due Date: Monday, April 9

You are to write three separate articles that could be used in a Charleston area publication such as cisternyard.com/George Street Observer, The Post and Courier, The City Paper or Charleston Magazine. The three types of articles are:

- **Meeting or event “follow” article—minimum 250-350 words**
 - **Must have quotes from at least three different people you interview in person or who speak at the meeting or speech**
- **Issue or controversy report—minimum 400-500 words**
 - **Must have a local angle (Charleston or C of C)**
 - **Must be a “hard” news topic**
 - **Make sure coverage is fair and balanced**
 - **Must have quotes from at least three different people you interview**
 - **At least one interview must be with an official or expert**
 - **This article can’t be just a “person on the street” story**
- **Profile or human interest story—500 words or more**
 - **An interesting person or place (please no friends, relatives, co-workers)**
 - **Must have quotes from at least three different people you interview**

There are a number of interesting campus issue, controversy and feature ideas listed in your book on pages 391-3 (Chapter 15, “Feature Stories”). Look at these and also scour other sources for news, events and features: online resources such as the C of C website, cisternyard.com, The George Street Observer, The Post and Courier, The City Paper, flyers and posters around campus, campus emails, your own observations.

Grading criteria: Each article will be given a letter grade. Your overall grade for Test III will be the average of the three article grades. Each article will be graded by these criteria: (Note: Be sure to follow all AP Style guidelines)

A—The story is newsworthy and exceptionally well written, thorough and free of errors.

B—The story is adequate but not exceptional

C—The story omits important facts or needs extensive editing

D—The story is superficial and needs extensive rewriting, or it lacks newsworthiness

F—The story is confusing, incomplete or inaccurate or it contains a misspelled name, libelous statement or serious factual error(s).

FF—The assignment was never turned in. (It seems unfair to give a student who came to class and tried the same grade as one who skipped class or failed to turn in the assignment.)

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Test III Details (p. 2)

More guidelines:

- Think of your due date in April as your publication date—when your articles would be available for people to read. With that in mind, be specific with dates you may mention. Write, for example, March 30, if that is when your meeting or event happened.
- You are **required** to format your three articles in a newspaper style format, complete with the name of the newspaper, and other graphic design, clip art, and photographs that will make it look like a real newspaper or newsletter.
- You are also encouraged to join with one or more of your classmates to collaborate on producing your own “newspaper” filled with all of the various articles that each person writes.
- Extra credit and consideration will be given to students who work together to produce such a joint publication. (however there cannot be duplicate articles)
- Carefully proofread your articles to catch all errors, typos, unclear writing, etc. Articles must comply to Associated Press style points.
- Each article must include three quotes from three people who you personally have interviewed. An article without the required minimum of three quotes from three different people will receive no higher than a C.
- Stories with factual errors or other serious journalistic flaws will get an automatic D or F.
- You are also required on a separate typed page to turn in brief details about the newsgathering you did for each story. On this include the following:
 - Story slug and which story it is (event/meeting, issue/controversy or human interest/feature)
 - The word count for each story
 - The names of each person quoted in each article and how, when and where you attained the quotes: Example: Patrick Harwood—I spoke to him in his office on April 5.

Layout Programs: Three that I recommend are as follows:

- ✓ Microsoft Publisher (go to the Microsoft Office suite, then search Newsletter)
- ✓ Newspaper/Newsletter Template (see link on class homepage)
- ✓ [Constant Contact](#) (email newsletter program)

Whichever way you do yours, you need to turn in a hard copy on the due date, preferably in color.

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