

**WORTH 1000 WORDS?**

**Captions complete story**

While the role of a good caption is to answer the obvious questions any reader will have about a photograph, a good caption may also include information on what happened before and after the shutter was open. If you accept that the average shutter speed is 1/125 of a second, it takes 125 photos to capture even one full second of life at school. Next to headlines, captions are the most read text in the publication. Attention must be paid!

Captions come in three basic flavors:

**1 The ident** – Some photos basically just need the name or names of those pictured. The action is obvious, or the photo is simply a mugshot/portrait. The crucial step in such captions is correctly spelling the names.  
Ernie Kenerski '09

**2 The one-sentence caption** – Used when space is at a premium, this functions much like a news lead, opening with some sort of attention-catching device, followed by a sentence written in present tense containing as many of the Five W's as you can.

**LAST GIFT** Ernie Kenerski '09, dashes through the doors of Best Buy on Dec. 23, in search of one last gift for his girlfriend, Rota Boatashore '10.

**3 The expanded caption** – More like a mini-news story, this caption adds to the one-sentence caption with information not immediately apparent in the photo, and usually concludes with a direct quote from someone pictured or someone who was involved in the news. Designers must plan for such captions, which can run to 75 words or more (but get incredible readership).

**LAST GIFT** Ernie Kenerski '09, dashes through the doors of Best Buy on Dec. 23, in search of one last gift for his girlfriend, Rota Boatashore '10. Ernie had just found out (from Rita's brother Michael) that Rita had gotten him something very nice. "I just didn't want to come off like some kind of cheapskate," Ernie said. "The store was jammed but I'm so glad I didn't just go with the cute bunny slippers."

Photographers should either write captions or provide the basic reporting for an editor to do so. You haven't met deadline until the caption is complete.



Below is a self-evaluation form specific to photojournalism, which you are encouraged to explore in future issues/deadlines.

**photographer evaluation**

Discussed section content with editors and staff to get a clear picture of the purpose of the coverage. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Helped double-check the master calendar to insure that all major events for this deadline were covered. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Clear attention to story-telling, with attention to before, during and after activity/event coverage. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Worked with editors on cropping and provided essential information and insights for cutlines. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Action and reaction shots ranged from intimate close-ups of individuals and small groups to establishing shots. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Verticals as well as horizontals were taken to assist designers, and both right and left direction shots were attempted. \_\_\_ of 30 possible

Photos were saved in the proper location(s) on the server, unusable photos were deleted, and top photos were adjusted correctly in Photoshop prior to placement. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

Photos reflected a variety of artistic techniques including framing, unique angles, leading lines, repetition, patterns and selective focus. \_\_\_ of 20 possible

All captions for published photos reported accurately and written to appeal to our readers, using the appropriate format (see sidebar to left) \_\_\_ of 30 possible

List missed assignments and/or deadlines, with narrative explanation for each:

Assigned  
penalty points

Total Points