



**BROADCAST**

**EVALUATION GUIDE**

**SIPA**

**Southern Interscholastic  
Press Association  
A Journalistic Media Organization**

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College of Journalism and Mass Communications  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC 29208

# BROADCAST

## EVALUATION GUIDE

This evaluation guide has been designed to assist both staffs and judges with evaluating broadcast productions against current regional and national standards of excellence. Staffs are also encouraged to use this evaluation guide to assist them in producing their scholastic programs.

The first section of this guide, scholastic guidelines, gives new and experienced staffs basic guidelines for producing scholastic broadcasts. Judges will use these guidelines to evaluate the entries.

Upon reviewing each entry judges will rate different areas of each segment. Once the judges have completed a review of all segments, they will give the program an overall rating of All-Southern, Superior, Excellent or Merit.

### SPECIAL THANKS

The SIPA Broadcast Evaluation Guide was written by John Lopiccolo, University of South Carolina; and, Carl Zimmermann, Countryside HS, Clearwater, Fla.

Summer 2000

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PROGRAM NAME

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SCHOOL NAME

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SCHOOL ADDRESS

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CITY / STATE / ZIP CODE

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ADVISER

**Southern Interscholastic Press Association**

College of Journalism and Mass Communications

University of South Carolina

Columbia, SC 20208

### Verbal Communications Guidelines

#### NEWS WRITING

- News stories should report recent events and happenings.
- Keep the following news elements in mind: proximity, consequences, names, conflict, emotions, unusualness and human interest. One of the most important aspects of writing a news story is finding interesting information and angles that will appeal to as many viewers as possible.
- Write short sentences in a conversational style. Use action verbs. Be specific in the information you give the audience, avoid vague words.
- Do not editorialize. Be objective and fair. Address all sides of an issue.
- Whenever possible, controversial statements should be part of a sound bite and not part of the reporter's copy.

#### FEATURE WRITING

- A wide variety of features can be used in scholastic broadcasts: human interest features, personality profiles, historical features, informational features and others.
- Research is important in feature writing. The reporter must be knowledgeable. Read books and

magazines, and interview as many people as possible for each story.

- Feature stories should arouse emotions from the viewer. Tell stories of interest to viewers.
- Good feature stories are written as if the reporter were telling a friend a story full of quotes and pictures.
- Vivid details and images are essential to good feature writing. The viewer should feel he/she is witnessing the events.
- Focus on a topic; don't be overreaching. Determine the focus before starting the research. Be ready to change focus if the story warrants it, but don't wander around and don't try to cover too much.
- Let people tell their own story; use sound bites and the subject's voice as narration.
- Avoid editorializing. Opinions should be in the sound bites.

#### SPORTS WRITING

- The reporter must understand the game he/she is covering. Sports viewers know the game and expect the reporter to know it.
- Cover the surroundings as well as the event itself. Include coaches and fans in the coverage. Good sports stories make the viewer feel he/she is actually at the event. Remember, some of the viewers may have been there.
- Use action verbs and be specific.

Don't editorialize. Report the actual events without pulling for your team.

- Cover a variety of sports: male/female; team/individual; varsity/junior varsity.

### Visual Communications Guidelines

#### GENERAL STYLE

- Pictures should be stable and level unless there is a strong reason to have camera movement. Use a tripod.
- Start with a strong visual image to bring the viewer into the story.
- Video should possess a story telling quality and match the audio copy that goes with it.
- Focus on natural action; avoid posed shots. Do not stage the news.
- Maintain strong composition, keeping in mind the basic photographic principles: rule of thirds, eye flow, leading lines, framing, etc.
- Use sequences: matched action shots edited together to advance the story.
- Use a variety of shot sizes: close ups, medium shots and wide shots.
- Try to end the story on a strong visual image the viewer will remember.

## TECHNICAL QUALITY

- Video should feature adequate and appropriate lighting.
- Maintain consistent and correct color balance.
- All shots must be properly focused.
- Graphics should be clear and easy to understand. Subjects should be properly identified.
- Titles and credits should be easy to read, use appropriate typeface and speed.
- Special effects and transitions must be done for a purpose and not distract the viewer.
- Sound bites must be clear, understandable and at the correct level.
- Natural sound should be part of the story and can often stand alone without narration.

## Talent Communications Guidelines

Reporter/anchor should be appropriately dressed for the situation and location.

The reporter should be secondary to the story. Don't let the reporter overpower the story or the guests.

The reporter/anchor should be poised, professional and confident.

Phrasing, diction and pace should demonstrate a reasonable attempt to adapt to standard broadcast style.

Reading should show that the reporter/anchor understands the story.

## Audio Communications Guidelines

- Audio levels must be consistent, not too soft and not distorted.
- Audio should lead the viewer through the story with appropriate narration, natural sound and/or music.

**NEWS WRITING**

\_\_\_\_ ALL SOUTHERN \_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_\_ EXCELLENT \_\_\_\_ MERIT

- Are general guidelines for news writing followed?
- Are new angles on dated events developed?
- Is conversational language used?
- Do stories appeal to the intended audience?
- Do stories reflect thorough reporting, multiple sources and various points of view?
- Is there an appropriate use of sound bites?
- Is information presented in straight-forward manner without reporter's/anchor's bias or personal opinion?

**FEATURE WRITING**

\_\_\_\_ ALL SOUTHERN \_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_\_ EXCELLENT \_\_\_\_ MERIT

- Are general guidelines for feature writing followed?
- Are topics approached in a fresh and creative way?
- Is conversational language used?
- Do stories appeal to the intended audience?
- Do stories reflect thorough research, use of sources and various points of view?
- Is there an appropriate use of sound bites?
- Is information presented in straight-forward manner without reporter's bias or personal opinion?

**SPORTS WRITING**

\_\_\_\_ ALL SOUTHERN \_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_\_ EXCELLENT \_\_\_\_ MERIT

- Are general guidelines for sports writing followed?
- Are accepted sports terms used and needless jargon avoided?
- Do stories appeal to the intended audience?
- Is there an appropriate use of sound bites?
- Do stories go behind the scenes to give viewers more than just the event?

**COMMENTS:****OVERALL EVALUATION****- VERBAL -**

\_\_\_\_ ALL-SOUTHERN

\_\_\_\_ EXCELLENT

\_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR

\_\_\_\_ MERIT

## COMMENTS:

## GENERAL STYLE

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\_\_\_ ALL SOUTHERN \_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_ EXCELLENT \_\_\_ MERIT

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- Are general guidelines for visual style followed?
- Are shots stable?
- Does video have a planned format, with beginning, middle and end?
- Are appropriate transitions -- cuts, dissolves, fades, etc.-- used to indicate changes?
- Does the video help to tell the story?
- Is there an appropriate use of well framed sound bites?
- Is there a good variety of shots?
- Is there a good use of sequences to move the story?
- Does the video appeal to the feelings of the viewer?
- Are shots well framed and composed?

## TECHNICAL QUALITY

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\_\_\_ ALL SOUTHERN \_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_ EXCELLENT \_\_\_ MERIT

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- Are shots well-lighted?
- Is color balance consistent and correct?
- Are all shots correctly focused?
- Are graphics clear and easy to understand?

## OVERALL EVALUATION

- VISUAL-

\_\_\_ ALL-SOUTHERN

\_\_\_ EXCELLENT

\_\_\_ SUPERIOR

\_\_\_ MERIT

AUDIO

- Are general guidelines for audio followed?
- Are audio levels correct and constant?
- Is there appropriate use of natural sound?
- Does narration stand out from background sound?
- Is there lack of static and noise ?
- Is there good level in sound bites?

COMMENTS:

OVERALL EVALUATION

- AUDIO-

\_\_\_ ALL-SOUTHERN

\_\_\_ EXCELLENT

\_\_\_ SUPERIOR

\_\_\_ MERIT

TALENT

- Are general guidelines for talent followed?
- Are reporters and anchors dressed appropriately?
- Are they poised and confident?
- Do reporters and anchors speak clearly?
- Do reporters and anchors speak in straight-forward manner without bias or personal opinion?

OVERALL EVALUATION

- TALENT-

\_\_\_ ALL-SOUTHERN

\_\_\_ EXCELLENT

\_\_\_ SUPERIOR

\_\_\_ MERIT

# OVERALL EVALUATION RATING

## ALL-SOUTHERN RATING

This is SIPA's highest evaluation rating. All-Southern broadcasts demonstrate excellence in all areas of scholastic broadcast production. These broadcasts effectively integrate writing, video and sound to give viewers an excellent record of school activities.

## SUPERIOR RATING

These broadcasts demonstrate excellence in most areas of scholastic broadcast production. While they consistently integrate writing, video and sound into their broadcasts, they are lacking in at least one area of overall execution.

## EXCELLENT RATING

These broadcasts demonstrate a basic understanding of general broadcast standards. They integrate writing, video and sound into their broadcasts, but are lacking in the overall execution that makes for a Superior broadcast.

## MERIT RATING

These broadcasts meet some general broadcast standards but lack necessary depth in writing and in use of video and audio.

SECTION

RATING

VERBAL

VISUAL

AUDIO

TALENT

## OVERALL EVALUATION RATING

\_\_\_ ALL-SOUTHERN

\_\_\_ SUPERIOR

\_\_\_ EXCELLENT

\_\_\_ MERIT