



# Texas FFA

## Agricultural Communications *Study Guide*

2012

*Premier Leadership, Personal Growth and Career Success*

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# Who Should Enter

FFA chapter reporters and other high school agricultural education students who show promise of being able to combine communications ability with agricultural knowledge should be encouraged to participate in the contest. Students who have done well in their English courses, as well as those who have served on the staffs of school publications will be good prospects. This is not meant to exclude any FFA member who has knowledge of agriculture and the ability to think logically.

Contestants are encouraged to seek help from their high school English or journalism instructors as well as from their agricultural education instructors.

This booklet was designed to be a complete reference for the contest. In addition, any journalism textbooks will be useful in preparing for the contest. Look for chapters which deal with grammar, punctuation, capitalization, word usage, spelling, news writing style and writing news stories.

## **References which will be used to prepare the contest:**

- Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (available at most major or campus bookstores)

## **Examples of some textbooks which could be useful are:**

- Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach by Ricky Telg, Ph.D. and Tracy Irani, Ph.D.
- High School Journalism, 2nd edition, by L.H. Hall.
- Secondary School Journalism, by Judith Ann Isaacs.
- Journalism Today, by Donald Ferguson and Jim Patten.
- Writing and Reporting News, 1st edition, by Carole Rich.
- Working with Words, by Brian S. Brooks and James L. Pinson.

These and other helpful publications may be available in your high school library and from your English and journalism teachers.



# How the CDE will be Conducted

## Event Rules

1. Teams will consist of three members.
2. Participants must wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
3. During the practicum portion of the event, one team member will be responsible for completing a written communication activity, one team member will be responsible for completing an electronic media activity, and one team member will be responsible for completing a visual design activity.
4. Any participant in possession of any electronic device in the event area will be immediately disqualified.
5. Contest participants are allowed to only bring a pen or pencil into the contest. Notebooks, clipboards, loose-leaf paper and bags will all be confiscated.
6. Only contest participants are allowed in the testing, press conference and practicum rooms.

## Event Format

By January 1 of each year, the state agricultural communications CDE committee will release event specifications for the upcoming contest. The specifications will outline the specific practicum activities, rules, detailed rubric, and software to be used.

The state contest will be held with the Texas FFA CDE contests at Texas Tech University, which is typically the third weekend in April. The contest begins promptly at 8 a.m. The schedule of events is as follows:

7:30-8:00	Event Registration (teams must pre-register to participate)
8:00	Orientation
8:10	Editing Exercise
8:30	Communications Quiz
8:50	Break
9:00	Press Conference
9:20	Question & Answer Session
9:30	Dismiss to practicums, 60 minutes to complete

## Equipment

No equipment, other than a pen or pencil, is needed to participate in this contest. However, in order to prepare students, it is recommended teachers acquire the software to be used in the contest. Contest officials will announce this information by January 1 of each year.



# Activities

## 1. Tests

### A. Editing Exercise – 25 points/individual; 75 points/team

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each team member will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document which contains 25 potential mistakes. Students will mark the line as correct or incorrect. If the line is incorrect, the student must correct the mistakes using the correct proofreader's marks (see Associated Press Stylebook). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or dictionary during this exercise.

### B. Communications Quiz – 25 points/individual; 75 points/team

Each team member will complete a quiz which covers the content of the current Associated Press Stylebook. Questions may come from any section excluding sports guidelines. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

## 2. Practicums – 100 points/individual; 300 points/team

The practicums will consist of three individual events. Each team must assign a member to one of the following areas PRIOR to arriving at the state event:

1. Design
2. Electronic Media
3. Writing

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. Teams will be seated by practicum group. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and press conference speaker to use during the event. An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish. The writers will then be involved in a 10-minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker). The other team members can listen to the Q and A, but cannot ask questions. Each writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question. Writers may ask more than one question; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many different participants as possible. No electronic devices of any kind, including tape recorders and cell phones, will be allowed during this portion of the event. Upon completion of the 10-minute question and answer session, participants will be dismissed to complete their assigned task.

### A. Designer

Each designer will use the press packet and information which was gathered in the press conference to develop a graphic design layout. The specific details, rules, and scoring rubric will be announced by January 1 each year. The objective is effective communication or information sharing through visual tools. Each participant will have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.



The activity will be as follows for the next three years:

- 2012 – Magazine page layout
- 2013 – Web page layout
- 2014 – Flyer/poster

### **B. Electronic Media Specialist**

Each electronic media specialist will use the press packet and information which was gathered in the press conference to develop an electronic media message. The specific details, rules, and scoring rubric will be announced by January 1 each year. Participants will have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.

The activity will be as follows for the next three years:

- 2012 – Social media plan
- 2013 – News broadcast
- 2014 – Blog

### **C. Writer**

Writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information which was gathered in the press conference. The specific details, rules, and scoring rubric will be announced by January 1 each year. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.

The activity will be as follows for the next three years:

- 2012 – Press release
- 2013 – News story
- 2014 – Feature story

## **Scoring**

Participants will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge. The criteria and points can be found on the scorecards in the National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE proposed changes. Note the national scorecards are suggested by National FFA and will be used only as a basis for the scoring rubric which the Texas FFA contest will use. Due to the unique nature of the rotating practicum activities, the score cards will be adjusted to fit the students' assigned tasks. Rubrics will be released to teachers by January 1 each year.



<b>Event</b>	<b>Points</b>
Communications Quiz	75 (25 pts/member)
Editing Exercise	75 (25 pts/member)
<b>Tests – 150 points possible</b>	
Writer Practicum	100
Electronic Media Practicum	100
Design Practicum	100
<b>Practicums – 300 points possible</b>	
<b>Total individual score possible</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total team score possible</b>	<b>450</b>

## Tiebreakers

1. Team and individual tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

- A. Practicum score**
- B. Quiz score**
- C. Editing exercise score**

2. Awards

Awards will be presented to individuals and/or teams based upon their rankings at the award ceremony.

## References

This list of references is not intended to be inclusive. Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available.

The following list contains references which may prove helpful during event preparation.

National FFA Core Catalog – Past CDE Material (<http://shop.ffa.org/cde-qas-c1413.aspx>)

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

Microsoft® Office computer program

Adobe® Creative Suite (most current edition)

National Farm Broadcasters ([http://www.depts.ttu.edu/aged/nafb\\_website/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/aged/nafb_website/))

Bivins, T. *Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format*, 4th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3

Calver, P. (editor). *The Communicator's Handbook*. 4th edition. Maupin House, Gainesville, FL 32607 <http://www.maupinhouse.com>

Harrower, T. *Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, 5th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 0-07-249291-0

Kalbfeld, B. *Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook*. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-136388-2

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.

# News Writing

Journalistic writing is different from traditional writing. For journalistic writing, it is important to be accurate, brief and clear when conveying a story.

- **Short and Sweet**

Keep sentences short, concise and to the point. Sentences averaging less than 15-20 words per sentence are easy to read. Also, keeping paragraphs short keeps readers interested. Use about three sentences per paragraph.

- **Simple Words**

Keep words short and simple. The fewer syllable words you use the better. If you must use difficult words, be sure to explain them in as simple terms as possible.

- **Individuality**

Be sure to use names and quotes when possible to make the story more appealing to the audience.

- **Active Verbs**

Using active verbs helps to grab the reader's attention and keeps the story moving.

## The ABCs of Journalism

The ABCs of journalism, or of any communication for that matter, are Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity.

- **Accuracy**

If the reader is to depend on what is read in the paper, the facts must be accurate. Furthermore, names must be spelled correctly, identifications made properly, and figures quoted carefully. Without doubt, accuracy is the reporter's greatest obligation.

- **Brevity**

If the reader's time is to be conserved and the publication's money saved, the story must be told in as few words as possible. Avoid supplementing a present tense verb with the word "now" and eliminate the wordiness of "due to the fact" by saying "because." The publisher is interested in saving words, too, for excess wordiness adds to the cost of getting out the paper.

- **Clarity**

If the reader is to understand what is read, the reporter must work for clarity. A good news story never raises a question in the reader's mind that it cannot answer.





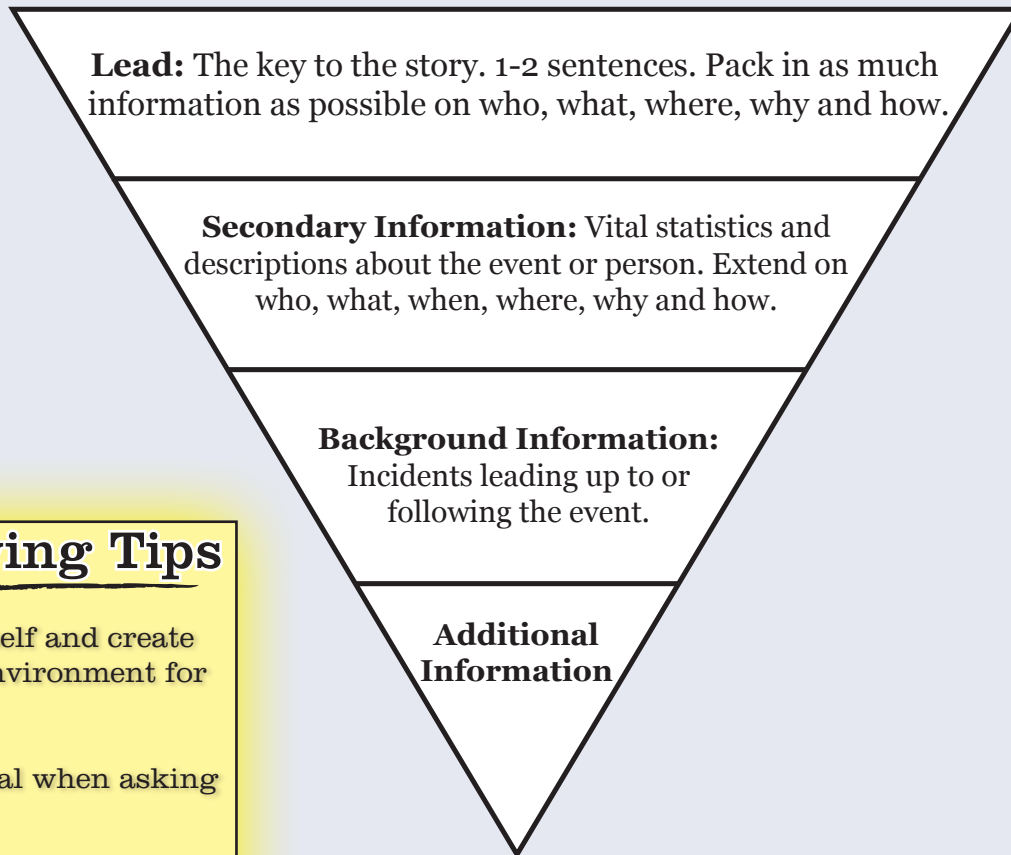
# Writing the News Story

It is standard newspaper practice to begin the news story with a paragraph worded to catch the reader's attention and summarize the information. This is called the "summary lead." Keeping your readers' interests in mind will help you decide what to feature in your lead.

To gain the reader's attention, you should begin the lead with the most interesting or most important element. This most often is the WHAT or perhaps the WHO.

The story as a whole is written in the "inverted pyramid arrangement." This means to put the most important facts in the summary lead, next most important facts in the second paragraph and so on in the order of descending importance. If the editors decide later the story should be shortened, they simply cut off the last paragraph, the last two paragraphs, or as much as necessary to make it the proper length.

## The Inverted Pyramid



### Interviewing Tips

Introduce yourself and create a comfortable environment for the interviewee.

Be conversational when asking questions.

Restate and/or verify information to make sure you are interpreting the information correctly.

During the interview, ask the most important questions first in case of time constraints.



# Elements of a Good News Story

1. Cover most, if not all, of the 5 W's and H.

WHO	will do, said or did something
WHAT	will be done, was said or happened
WHEN	it will be done, it was said or happened
WHERE	it will be done, it was said or happened
HOW	it will affect me or how it was done

2. Follow the inverted pyramid style with most important facts first.
3. Keep your sentences short.
4. Use short, well-known words (avoid jargon).
5. Assume no one knows anything about your subject, but don't insult anyone's intelligence.
6. Use active words to add zest (avoid, for example, it ~ said, or it is thought).
7. Use specific, concrete – not abstract – words and terms.
8. Do not editorialize (inject your own views or those of your source without attribution).
9. Avoid color adjectives, those, which reflect opinion.
10. Keep paragraphs short. Usually two or three sentences is enough, and sometimes you may have only one sentence in a paragraph.
11. Create easy-to-read paragraphs, which amplify the lead or preceding paragraphs.
12. Write in third person (he, she or John said). Second person is becoming more common.
13. Know when to quit writing.
14. Avoid pronouns for which the antecedent is unclear (use nouns to avoid ambiguity).
15. Avoid introducing sentences with dates or prepositional phrases (and avoid overuse of prepositions inside the sentence).
16. Proofread copy and edit unnecessary words; eliminate errors of grammar and spelling.
17. For good measure, have someone else read the copy and tell you what they think it says.
18. If news story is longer than one page, write “more” at the bottom of each page.
19. Indicate the end of the news story by centering -30- or ### below the final line of the story.

## Resources:

Graves, R. A. (2005). *Communicating in the Agriculture Industry*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Learning.

<http://aec.ifas.ufl.edu/aee4035web/elementsofgoodnewstory.pdf>

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.

## Keep Your Credibility

1. Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling (especially names).
2. Check facts such as titles, dates and figures twice – when you are writing and afterward.
3. Have someone else read your story to check for typing errors and comprehension.
4. Rewrite awkward sentences – eliminate extra words.
5. Re-read the story one last time to see if thought and fact follow logically.



# Press Release

Writing an effective news release involves knowing why you're writing it, understanding the audience, evaluating the topic, putting it in the proper format, and evaluating its effectiveness. The first thing a writer should decide when sitting down to write a release is "Why am I writing this?" or "Does this topic warrant sending out a media release?" The format should be to create a release, which is short, newsworthy, easy to read and easy to edit. Here are some tips for writing a news release:

- **Write a strong lead:** Learning to write a lead is important. Practice writing good leads, which use striking statements or other attention-getters. Readers sense enthusiasms in a writer.
- **Be local:** Editors may reject news releases lacking local interest or impact.
- **Be correct:** Nothing is so embarrassing as an agency or organization release with poor spelling or an unchecked fact. If you have to guess on a name or fact, hold the item until you are sure.
- **Write tight:** Before sending the release, apply the imaginary scissors test: Will it make sense if it is cut from the bottom? Make sure the answer is yes.
- **Stay in touch:** Maintaining good relationships with editors and reporters is important. Visit editors to learn what they want and why they want it.

## Press Release Format

- **Headings:** In the top left corner of a press release, write the date and author of the release. On the opposite side, provide contact information.
- **Headline:** About two inches below the heading, include a headline in all capital letters.
- **Dateline:** In all capital letters, write the location (LUBBOCK, TEXAS—) of the story followed by a dash.
- **Lead:** Use a powerful statement to grab the reader's attention. Be sure to get to the point quickly so readers aren't guessing.
- **Body:** Here include the who, what, where, when, why and how to support the lead. Answer these questions quickly and concisely.
- **Ending:** Conclude with facts or basic information. Keep it simple. At the end of the press release use --30--, --End--, or ###. If you must use more than one page, write --More-- at the end of the pages previous to the last one and number the pages.
- **Boilerplate:** A boilerplate is written at the bottom of the press release. It contains background information about the company or organization the press release is written for.



# Sample Press Release



84th National FFA Convention October 19-22, 2011  
National FFA Organization 6060 FFA Drive P.O. Box 68960 Indianapolis, IN 46278-1370  
P: 317-802-6060 F: 317-802-6061 www.ffa.org

Heading

## NEWS RELEASE

Headline

Media Contact: Kristy Meyer, [kmeyer@ffa.org](mailto:kmeyer@ffa.org)

Dateline

### The National FFA Organization National Event Winners - Agricultural Issues Forum 2011

Lead

INDIANAPOLIS—Winners of the National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum Career Development Event (CDE) were announced Friday at the annual awards banquet. The event was held in conjunction with the 84th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind. Dr. Jerry Peters of Indiana served as superintendent of the event.

The members of the top team in the nation received scholarships to further their education at a post-secondary institution of their choice. The scholarships and the agricultural issues forum event are sponsored by Elanco of Greenfield, Indiana as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum CDE is a competitive activity that tests students' knowledge of agricultural issues and evaluates how well they can apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations. To qualify for the National Agricultural Issues Forum CDE, teams must design a presentation that addresses multiple viewpoints of a contemporary agricultural issue and present it to a number of audiences in their community. For the national event, they present a portfolio based on their local audiences' feedback and deliver their presentation to a panel of judges.

This event, held at the Westin Hotel in Indianapolis, Ind., is one of many educational activities at the national FFA convention in which FFA members practice the lessons learned in agricultural education classes.

#### Top Placing Teams

1st Place-- Texas	Sara Barrientez, Megan Akins, Rebecca Decker, Kelsey Erwin, Jaycie Sorrells, and Kalee Spitzer, all of Stamford FFA
2nd Place-- California	Derek Brown, Elizabeth Gist, Brooke Hillman, Brianda Louro, and Ruben Perez, all of Tulare FFA
3rd Place-- Kentucky	Lauren Jones, Tori Gambrell, Alex Ray, Aylissa Mattingly, Kayla Williams, Taisious Robbins, and Brittany Bowling, all of Nelson County FFA
4th Place-- Idaho	Cherish Christiansen, Laura Harwood, Challis Stewart, Kelsey Taylor, Cindy Torres, Rylee Trent, and Dani Walker, all of American Falls FFA

#### Team Emblems Listed

##### Gold Emblem Teams

Tulare FFA, CA	American Falls FFA, ID
Nelson County FFA, KY	Stamford FFA, TX

##### Silver Emblem Teams

Killingly FFA, CT	Strawberry Crest High FFA, FL
Midland FFA, IL	Hopkins FFA, MI

Morris Sr FFA, MN  
Stevensville FFA, MT  
Spring Creek FFA, NV  
Medical Lake FFA, WA

Mountain Home FFA, AR  
Fowler FFA, CO  
Shenandoah FFA, IN  
Mansfield FFA, LA  
Gray's Creek FFA, NC  
Pioneer FFA, NY  
Amber Pocasset FFA, OK  
Conococheague FFA, PA  
Riverton FFA, UT  
Colby FFA, WI

Troy FFA, MO  
Dexter FFA, NM  
Wilson Central FFA, TN  
Snowy Range FFA, WY

##### Bronze Emblem Teams

Elfrida FFA, AZ  
Saint Ansgar FFA, IA  
Arkansas City FFA, KS  
Clear Spring FFA, MD  
Schuyler Central FFA, NE  
Amanda-Clearcreek FFA, OH  
Crater FFA, OR  
Newell FFA, SD  
Central FFA, VA  
Roane County FFA, WV

-- MORE --

Ending

#### Boilerplate

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 523,309 student members – all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,487 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. The 84th National FFA Convention is held Oct. 19-22, 2011 in Indianapolis, Ind., and will draw 50,000-plus FFA members, advisors and guests from across the country. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth** and **career success** through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information and follow us on [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) and [FFA Nation](#).

###

Ending

#### Resource:

[https://www.ffa.org/documents/conv\\_2011\\_cde\\_AINewsRelease.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/documents/conv_2011_cde_AINewsRelease.pdf)



# Feature Story

A feature story is more relaxed than a traditional news story. It contains greater amounts of detail and description. There are several types of feature stories:

- **News feature** – written around a timely event
- **Informative feature** – focuses on little known, the odd, or the unusual
- **Historical feature** – focuses on something of historical relevance to the audience
- **Personal experience feature** – recounts the accomplishments of an individual or group
- **Descriptive profile** – centers on places people can visit or events they can take part in
- **How-to-do-it yourself feature** – explains how to build something or how to do something
- **Profile** – Tells about a person by examining one or two aspects of a person. It does not tell a person's entire life story and is enhanced through the use of anecdotes.

## Structure of a Feature Story

When writing a feature story be sure to describe the topic in specific and concrete words. Try to have one direct quote for every three or four paragraphs to brighten the feature. Also, stick to what you observe and what people say.

**Lead** – Unlike a news story, the lead can be longer than one sentence. The lead draws the reader into the story.

**Engine Paragraph** – Sometimes called the “why paragraph” is the second or third paragraph setting the stage for the rest of the story and why the reader should continue reading.

**Body** – The bulk of the story is found in the body. It provides the reader with details, facts and observations made by the writer.

**Ending/Conclusion** – Wraps up the story and can end with any of these closures:

- *Circle Technique* – Begins and ends with essentially the same idea, phrase, question, statement or description.
- *Surprise* – An ending the reader is not expecting.
- *Summary Ending* – Summarizes the topic of the story.

### Resource:

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.



# A WELL-ROUNDED EXPERIENCE

**Texas FFA member excels in agriculture, academics and community service**

**L**eighton James is living proof that you get out of FFA what you put into it. The Corpus Christi, Texas FFA member graduated third in her class from Tuloso-Midway High School in May and is attending Texas A&M University with \$18,000 in college scholarships courtesy of FFA.

"I give FFA all the credit for preparing me for college and the business world," says 18-year-old Leighton, the oldest of nine brothers and sisters. "FFA taught me how to communicate with people. I hear people say FFA is about showing animals, but it's so much more – there are people in FFA who have never even touched an animal. There really are opportunities for everybody."

Leighton's favorite part of FFA is public speaking. She competed in FFA Creed Speaking and prepared public speaking throughout high school and even leaned on her speaking skills for a beauty pageant. While many contestants might sing, dance or play an instrument for the talent portion, Leighton gave a motivational speech called "Something to Leave Behind," and it helped her win the crown at the

Nueces County Junior Livestock Show queen contest in 2009.

"My talent was public speaking, and it was a patriotic speech that talked about doing something worthwhile with your life," Leighton says. "My goal was to be in the top five, and I was shocked when I won because I was a sophomore, and the queen is usually a senior. I received a scholarship, and I got to be in parades and do TV interviews. It was awesome getting to represent our county livestock show and explain to people what it was about."

Winning the crown wasn't the only shocker of Leighton's high school career. She started showing steers in eighth grade, and her freshman year, she

snagged the grand champion steer victory at her county livestock show. Her champion steer named Prince later sold for \$26,000, which she will use for college.

"I started showing lambs in third grade and switched to steers in eighth grade," Leighton says. "It was shocking to everyone when I had the grand champion steer because I was new to the competition."

**CORPUS CHRISTI**  
FFA member Leighton James created a peer-mentoring program in her hometown.





PHOTO BY BRIAN MCLORE

[WWW.FFA.ORG/FFANATION](http://WWW.FFA.ORG/FFANATION)

FFA NEW HOPE





Leighton James often goes from wearing jeans and boots in the show barn to a full-length sequined dress for a pageant, and she's been successful in both.

**“I hear people say FFA is about showing animals, but it’s so much more – there are people in FFA who have never even touched an animal. There really are opportunities for everybody.”**

In June 2010, Leighton was one of 10 Texas FFA members selected from 400 applicants for the Texas FFA Ford Leadership Scholars program, a partnership between the Texas FFA Foundation, Ford Division, and Texas Ford Dealers that gives Texas FFA members opportunities for leadership and community service.

“It was by far the best program I’ve gotten to be involved with through FFA,” Leighton says. “We all met in Austin in July for one week of training, and I learned more about myself in that one week than ever in my life.”

The goal of the training week was to prepare the 10 scholars to create their own community service project in their respective communities. During the week, members created a city park for a small community outside San Antonio, designed a homeless living community for Mobile Loaves & Fishes Inc. (a social outreach ministry for the homeless) in Austin, and visited with a three-star general at Fort Hood.

After that experience, Leighton returned to Corpus Christi and started a tutoring program at a recreation center for kids from low-income families. She recruited tutoring volunteers from area high schools, created schedules and organized the tutoring plan. The program lasted from October 2010 through February 2011 and

served about 20 kids in second through fifth grades.

“We helped them with their homework, but we also played basketball, colored and jumped rope with them,” Leighton says. “A lot of the kids had serious issues at home and needed a friend who was stable. Those kids have seen a lot for how little they are. It was so cute because they all called me ‘Coach.’”

In addition to all her other responsibilities, Leighton worked part-time jobs at a barbecue restaurant and a Western apparel store during high school. She also served as her FFA chapter’s president and as district secretary.

After hearing Leighton speak publicly, her high school administrators asked her to be the motivational speaker for incoming freshmen in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

“I spoke to them about the difficulties of high school and how they can overcome them,” Leighton says. “And I talked to them about being responsible for their own decisions and not making excuses. Several of their parents came up to me afterward and asked how I learned to speak. I always told them it was through FFA.”

Leighton’s best piece of advice to young FFA members is to educate themselves on every opportunity FFA offers.

“FFA is much more than people think,” she says. “Get involved and stick with it. FFA scholarships are paying for a whole year of my college. All the effort I put into it has really paid off.”

– Jessica Mozo



# Broadcast

People only have one chance to hear what a broadcaster has to say. Therefore, it's vital to consider what's most important in the story. Broadcasters are deemed with not only writing a news story, but also the delivery.

## Story Structure

**Lead** – start with the who, when and where

**Body** – use supporting facts or quotes from sources

**Ending** – a summary, plan for future action or additional resources

## When Writing the Story...

- **Use a conversational style**

1. Keep sentences to one thought long.

Not conversational: *A local student, Kara Brown, who is one of 25 students selected nationally, will get to shake hands with the president today.*

Conversational: *A local student will get to shake hands with the president today. Kara Brown is one of only 25 students selected nationally.*

2. Avoid vocabulary or wording that people don't usually use in conversation.

Not conversational: *One should use caution today when driving on Interstate 35.*

Conversational: *Drivers should use caution today when driving on I-35.*

3. Use contractions – that's how people talk.

Too formal: *The president says he cannot attend.*

Broadcast style: *The president says he can't attend.*

4. It's OK to start a sentence with *And* or *But*.

5. It's OK to use dashes for dramatic pauses.

**Resource:**

Brooks, B. S. & Pinson, J. L. (2010). *Working with Words*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.



# Presenting the Broadcast

Imagery is the key for writing for radio. Make sure your listeners “see” what you are saying. When preparing a piece, begin by getting your listener’s attention. Use a visual fact, an interesting idea, a thought-provoking question or a challenging statement. Arouse curiosity and interest. Your lead must catch the attention of even the most casual listener.

- **Identify your audience.** This is considered “Rule Number One.” Know who you want to talk to and why. Radio’s strength is in its ability to reach target audiences. Take advantage of this by learning the listening habits of your clients.
- **News is the easiest way to start using radio because it is fueled by your basic product information.** A typical news story is less than 30 seconds long and tells one piece of information correctly. News can be defined as any piece of information affecting your head, heart or pocketbook. In other words, radio is information stimulating one’s curiosity or interest.
- **News must be timely.** Did it just happen? Will it be interesting tomorrow? Will it continue to be an interesting topic?

The first two sentences of your story or spot are the most important. If you don’t get the listener’s attention in the first seven seconds, chances are you won’t get it at all.

When writing for radio, remember these rules about delivery. The three B’s of delivery remind us to be you, be at ease and be enthusiastic.

- **Think the thought.** Regardless of the topic or idea, think about it. See it and feel it. Project your personality. Sell your listeners on the points you are making. Enthusiasm and sincerity will help convince them you believe what you are saying.
- **Think the thought through until the end.** Read or speak by phrases. Know how the sentence will come out before you start. Keep half an eye on the end of the sentence while you are reading the first part. Keep sentences short. Type information in all caps and spell out numbers. This will add smoothness to delivery and will help you interpret the meaning of the phrases as part of the whole.
- **Talk at a natural speed.** But, change occasionally to avoid monotony. Vary the pitch and volume of your voice to get variety, emphasis and attention. Control your breathing to take breaths between units of thought; otherwise, you will sound choppy. Avoid dropping your voice when it sounds unnatural to do so.
- **Talk to an individual, not a crowd.** Speak clearly in your normal, conversational, friendly tone. Your aim should be to talk to your listeners, not read to them. Talk to the audience you have pictured in your mind as if they have never heard what you are saying, and they may never hear it again.
- **Practice.** Never give up practicing speech and delivery techniques. This is an area which needs constant attention. Try reading the newspaper aloud once or twice a week.
- **Always listen to the final product.** Listen to how it sounds to the audience. Listen to what you did as if you were an individual in the target audience. Did it work the way you thought it would?

## Sample Broadcast Scripts

**REPORTER:** GOOD MORNING. WHEAT PRICES CONTINUE TO DROP ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. WHEAT CLOSED YESTERDAY AROUND THREE DOLLARS, AND ANALYSTS EXPECT THE TREND TO CONTINUE. AG ECONOMIST JOHN SMITH TELLS US WHY.

**SMITH:** I THINK THERE IS TOO MUCH WHEAT AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW, AND FLOUR MILLS SIMPLY ARE NOT BUYING WHEAT. IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

**REPORTER:** TO ADD TO THE ISSUE, THE HIGH PLAINS IS SEEING A VERY GOOD WHEAT HARVEST THIS YEAR, FURTHER ADDING TO THE WHEAT THAT IS ALREADY IN SUPPLY.

YOUR GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK MARKET UPDATE IS NEXT.

Instead of this:

**SMITH:** WHEAT PRICES FELL BY 32 CENTS YESTERDAY.

**REPORTER:** SMITH ATTRIBUTES THE DROP IN PRICES TO AN OVER SUPPLY OF WHEAT WORLD-WIDE.

Use this:

**REPORTER:** WHEAT PRICES FELL BY 32 CENTS YESTERDAY. AG ECONOMIST JOHN SMITH PROVIDES AN EXPLANATION FOR THE DROP IN PRICES.

**SMITH:** I THINK THERE IS TOO MUCH WHEAT AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW, AND FLOUR MILLS SIMPLY ARE NOT BUYING WHEAT. IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

**Resource:** *National Association of Farm Broadcasting Foundation*



# Flyers and Posters

Flyers and posters allow for great exposure for a company or organization to promote themselves or an event.

When creating a flyer or poster keep these things in mind:

- **Wordiness**

It's important to be concise and to the point when placing text on a flyer or poster. Too much text clutters the page. Someone only has a brief moment to understand what the flyer or poster is trying to portray.

- **Graphical Images**

Graphics are a great way to help draw attention to your flyer or poster. Graphics should be of relevance and strategically placed. The flyer or poster should be balanced.

- **Purpose**

The flyer or poster should clearly state the purpose. For example, if your FFA Chapter is hosting a spaghetti dinner the flyer should at least include the title of the event, who is hosting the event, where the event will be held, and what day and time the event will be held.

Here are some suggestions to help you effectively create a flyer or poster:

- **Design and Layout**

First decide if the heading or image will be dominate. Then arrange the heading, image and body on the flyer or poster.

- **Text**

The heading of the poster should be one to five words long and the letters should be two to four inches tall. The rest of the words on the poster should concisely convey your message. Use short sentences and it is okay to use fragments.

- **Images**

Photographs should be at least 300 dpi, if not the picture will look pixilated.

- **Background**

The background of the flyer or poster should be simple to avoid distracting the reader.

Many software programs are available to utilize for the creation of flyers and brochures. Popular ones include:

- Adobe InDesign
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Word
- QuarkXpress

**Resource:**

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.

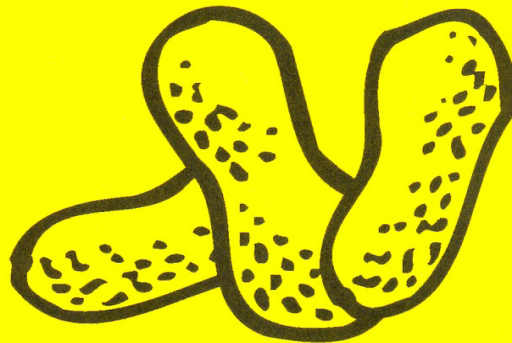


## Sample Flyer

# Peanut Festival

## Wellington, Texas

Come join us for the parade on the square followed by food, festivities, games and fun at Ellison Park on Main Street.



Saturday, September 4

Parade begins at 10:00 a.m.  
Festival immediately following



# Graphic Design

Previous to the Internet, graphics were the key element in communication. Visual symbols were fundamental to our understanding of a message. When words failed, pictures would communicate.

If your goal is to communicate successfully, understanding the principles of graphic design is helpful. Graphics can make your product or production more attractive, clarify your message and increase retention by your audience.

## Magazine Layout Design Principles

A good design presents information in an easy, readable fashion while looking pleasing and attractive. The best way to get ideas for a layout is to look through magazines for ideas. What was good about the layout? What was bad? Did it reach the intended audience?

In attempting to achieve balance in your design, you must realize which elements such as illustrations, photos and headlines, by their size, carry more weight than the rest of the text. This means the eye is more readily attracted to space by its dominance. You achieve a balanced look by spacing these elements with careful consideration of their relationship with everything else on the paper.

- **Balance**

Good balance can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Think about a page and cutting it in half either vertically or horizontally. Do both sides balance each other?

- **Proportion**

Proportion is the spatial relationship between each design element.

- **Contrast**

The dominant focus or element on a page is the contrast. The elements that are darker, larger or more interesting are the focal point of the design. Good designs should have a focal point.

- **Unity**

Elements should work collectively to create a good design.

- **Repetition**

Repetition refers to creating a pattern or line for the eye to follow by repeating or sequencing objects.

- **White Space**

Don't forget white space can be used visually to create balance. The contrast of text or graphics surrounded by white space is going to draw attention to the space, for example. Don't be afraid of leaving white space to help balance.



# Elements of Design

## Text and Typeface

- *Text* – any size, shape and placement of the printed word. Text can be placed:
  - A. *Full Justified* – All of the text is “flush” on both the right and left sides.
  - B. *Left Justified* – The text is “flush” on the left-hand side of each page or column of text, but is “ragged” or uneven on the right-hand side.
  - C. *Center Justified* – Text is centered on the page.
  - D. *Right Justified* – The text is “flush” on the right and uneven on the left. Right justified is rarely used.

Text can also be **boldface**, *italicized*, or underlined. These text styles should only be used to draw the readers’ attention.

- *Typeface (type or font)* – the actual look of the letters. Usually the type is either serif or sans serif.
  - E. *Serif fonts* are letters with “feet” or “tails.” These are a good choice for printed material because the “feet” make it easier for the readers to follow the text.
  - F. *Sans Serif fonts* are letters without “feet” or “tails.” These fonts are viewed as more contemporary and have a cleaner look. Sans serif fonts are good for short headlines, brief photo captions, or text projected onto a screen.

## Examples

### Left Justified

The text you are currently reading is set to left justified. All text flushes to the left side.

### Full Justified

The text you are currently reading is set to full justified. All text flushes both the right and left sides.

### Center Justified

The text you are currently reading is set to center justified. All text is centered.

### Right Justified

The text you are currently reading is set to right justified. All text is flushed to the right side.

This is a serif font. Notice the “feet.”

This is a sans serif font. Notice there are no “feet.”

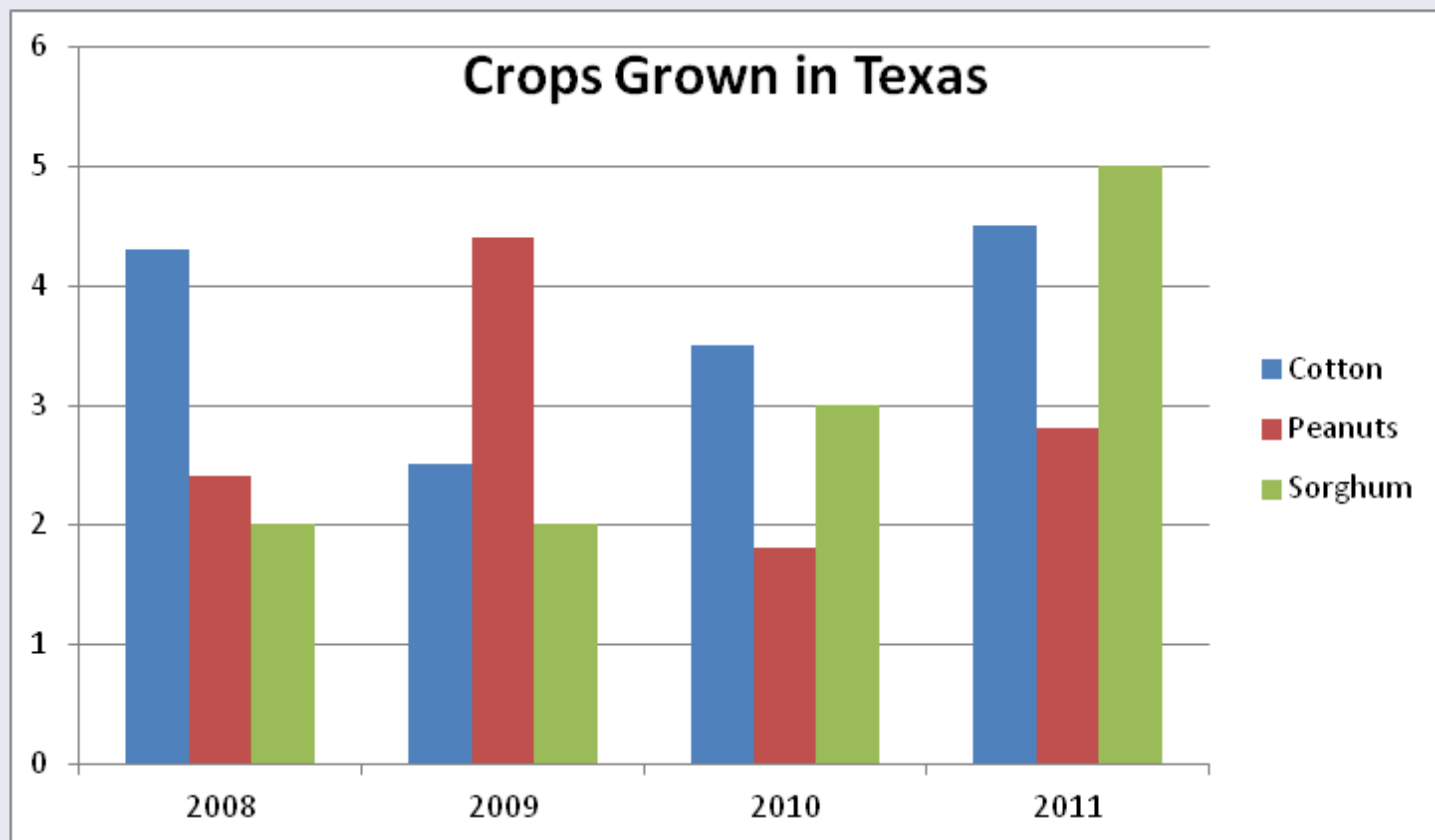


# Graphic Art

Visual aids are an excellent way to help display numerical data. They should be clean and easy to read. You can convey the information in several types of charts and graphs. Graphics can convey information quickly and provide the reader a sense of relevance better than just a table of numbers.

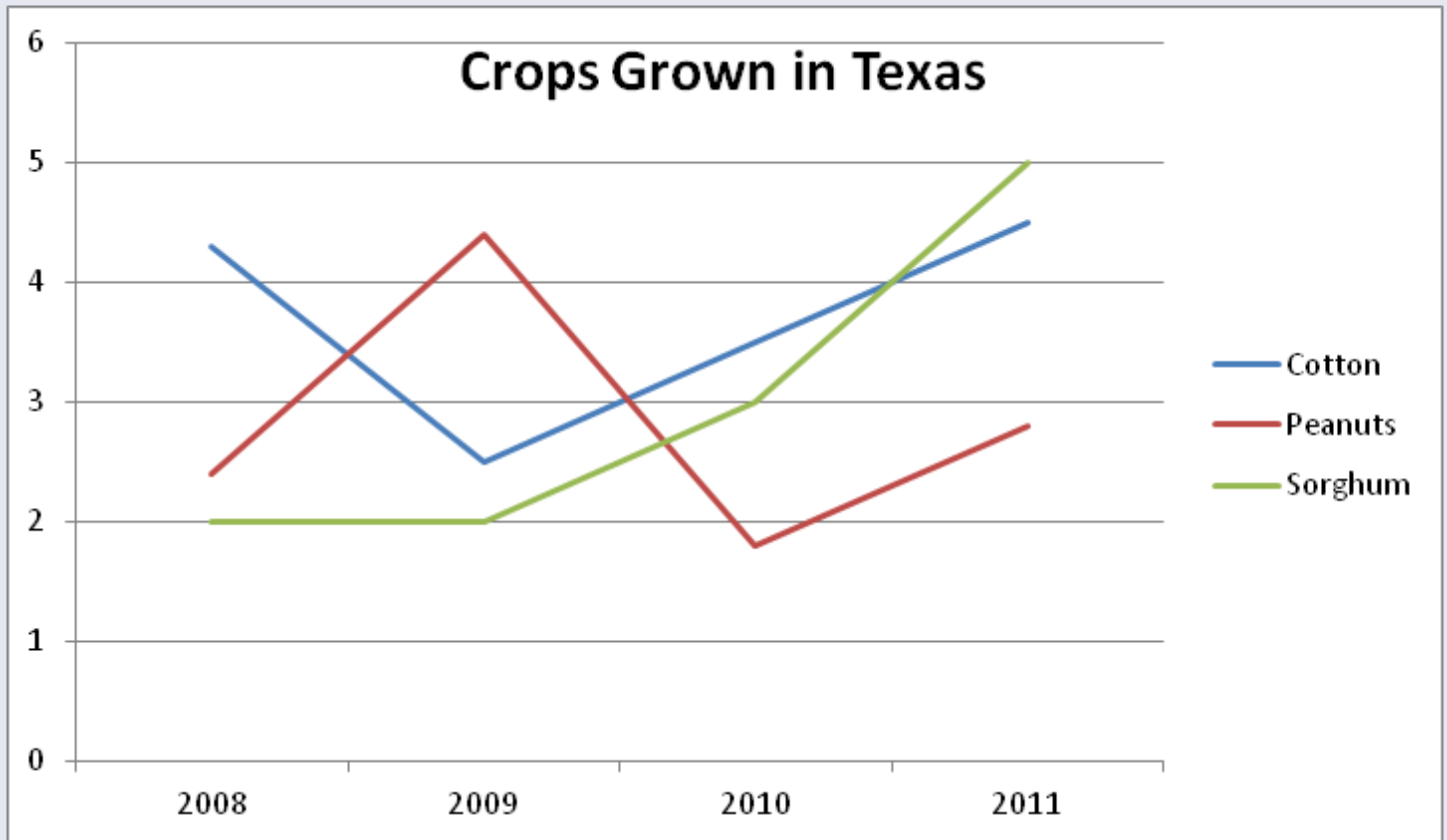
- **Bar charts** – These graphics show comparisons of types of interval data including times, locations and amounts. Bar charts allow us to compare data from different times, locations or sources. The bars may be horizontal or vertical.
- **Line graphs** – Trends and frequencies are types of data used in line graphs. No more than 4 lines should be presented in a graph. It is best to distinguish different lines by using different colors or thicknesses. Show current data with solid lines, and illustrate future data with broken lines.
- **Pie charts** – Pie charts are used to show the proportion of parts making up a whole (ex: ethnic background of all students in your high school). Avoid using three-dimensional charts because they are hard to read. Use solid colors for segments or clearly differentiated patterns.

## Sample Bar Chart

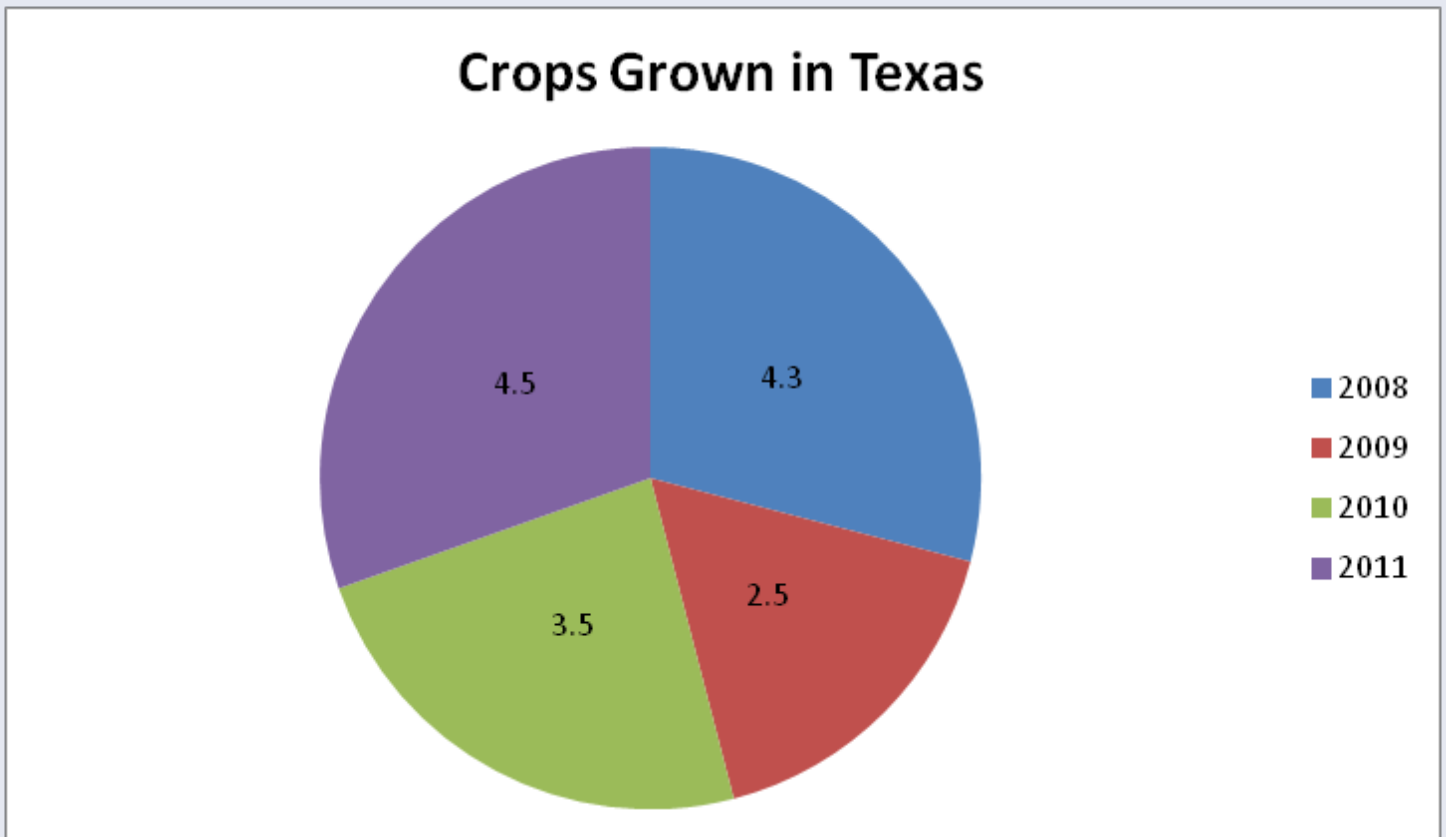




## Sample Line Graph



## Sample Pie Chart



# Photo Editing

If you are using photographs to illustrate, they may need to be enlarged or reduced from what is available. Remember you want a photo to help the reader understand the point you are demonstrating. The photo must show clearly what is needed for the reader to comprehend. To crop a photo means to zero in on your subject and eliminate what is not needed. You must realize the shape of the photo after cropping the space you must allow in your layout.

- **Rule of Thirds**

Divide the photo into thirds horizontally and vertically. There are four points where the lines intersect and those points are where the subject or focal point of the photo should be aligned.

- **Lines**

Lines add dynamics and can serve as lead for the eye to follow to the main subject.

- **Balance**

Balance depends on the arrangement of shapes, colors and areas of light and dark. These should all complement one another in order for symmetrical or asymmetrical balance to be achieved.

- **Framing**

Elements such as tree branches, buildings, shadows, etc. can be used to frame a subject in a picture. This helps to give the picture a feeling of depth.

- **Simplicity**

By removing complicated backgrounds, unrelated subjects and moving in close can help to simplify photos. Remember the rule of thirds for a more dynamic shot.

# Photo Captions

Photo captions provide insight into the photo. They should be brief, provide clarity and be creative.

- **First Sentence:** Describes who is in the photograph and what is going on within the photo in the present tense followed by the city and state where the image was made.
- **Second Sentence:** Gives context to the news event or describes why the photo is significant.

Try to keep the caption to no more than two sentences including all relevant information.

### Resources:

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.

The Associated Press Stylebook 2011



# Web Design

Creating usable websites is key to communication success in today's technological world. Websites can use a multi-media approach to communicate material and information to general and specific audiences.

## Writing for Web

Writing for the Web is slightly different than writing for print. You do not want to transfer the content of printed documents directly to your Web page. Here are some tips:

- **Know your audience** – use the right tone and style for your audience
- **Keep paragraphs short** – one theme per paragraph
- **Chunk information** – Use headings and subheadings to organize information
- **Proofread** – Typographical errors on a Web page cause a site to lose its credibility
- **Label all hyperlinks** – People should know where they are going when they click on a hyperlink.
- **Do not overdo the hyperlinks** – Having too many hyperlinks may cause a reader to “link out” to another website. Use links as resources, but try to keep readers on your page.
- **Use bold text and colored text for emphasis** – Do not use light-colored text if readers will print out pages.
- **Use color and graphics to create visual interest and direct the reader's focus from one topic to the next**
- **Use good layout and design techniques, such as white space, bulleted lists, headings and subheads, to “chunk” information** – This makes it easier for your readers to comprehend the information.

## The Design Process

Keep the site simple if possible. Ask yourself about your intended audience and from there construct your message and design. Your complete design should be based on these principles. Here are a few ideas to help you build your site:

- **Design an organizational chart for the website** – Planning out what goes on each page helps link the pages together.
- **Think about the sites you use on a regular basis** – What do you like or dislike about them?
- **Decide on the site's theme and style** – Should it be more informational, educational or entertaining?
- **Determine how many pages you will design** – Small sites have three or four pages whereas large sites have dozens or hundreds of pages.



# Learn From Good Examples

You should look at good examples of websites, and you should locate and evaluate websites needing improvement. How do you know when you have discovered a good website? Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the website?
- Does it meet the needs of the intended audience?
- Is it easy to understand?
- Is the content easy to read on the computer screen?
- Does the website contain functional links?
- Does the page load quickly in all browsers?
- Is there contact information located on the site?
- Is there a home page link visible at all times?
- Is the site easy to navigate?

## Good websites should be

- Accurate, helpful, and useful
- Easy to use and navigate
- Visually interesting
- Informative
- Not too cluttered or difficult to read

## Web users want visually attractive pages. Use these tips when creating a website:

- Use a consistent theme and style
- Pages should be visual, not text-driven
- Do not overuse animation and effects
- Include a site index or map including links to all pages on the site in one place

# Web Design Development

Designing a layout for the Web is similar, yet different from designing a layout for print. If your goal is to communicate information using a website, you must know proper formatting for text, photos and other types of media included on websites. A few of the differences and recommendations are listed below:

- Humans prefer text-based writing on print rather than electronically; therefore, keep statements on websites short and to the point. If possible, it is best to bullet information. If you must include vast amounts of text-based writing on a website, it is best to offer this information in a printable format.



- Photos on websites must be a lower resolution than print. The optimal format and resolution for Web photos are:

Format: .jpg

Color: RGB

Resolution: 72 dpi

This format and resolution allows photos to load quickly in a browser, while maintaining optimal visual quality on a computer screen.

Make sure all links within a website are functional. If the website links to another website, it is best to have the site open in a new window.

## Other things to consider include

- **Division of Space** – White space is used to focus the user on the content and helps to avoid clutter.
- **Formal and informal balance** – Formal balance is when objects are symmetric on the right and left sides of the page. Informal balance is when one side is intentionally unbalanced. More and heavier elements draw the eye as a focal point.
- **Visual vectors** – Vertical, horizontal and diagonal “lines” are formed by the way objects are arranged on a page. These lines allow the readers eyes to see connections between objects and text.
- **Repetition** – Similar objects appear in a pattern, such as a row of navigation buttons.
- **Contrast** – Contrast is the relationship of light and dark elements on a page. The farther apart objects are on a page, the more contrast there is, such as using a drop shadow on an image.
- **Shape, size, color, texture** – Elements of an object or text that make it stand out and complement the rest of the design.
- **Typography** – Typefaces or fonts are styled formats for the characters in the alphabet.

## Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

CSS provides functionality for Web designers. It allows Web designers to apply typographical styles, color and page layout instructions to a Web page. CSS is a flexible, cross-platform, standards-based language developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

### Advantages of CSS:

- **Typography and page layout can be better controlled.** This includes font size, line spacing, letter spacing, indents, margins and element positioning.
- **Style is separate from structure.** The format of the text and colors used can be configured and stored separately from the body of the page.
- **Styles can be stored.** You can store styles in a document and associate them with the Web page.



- **Documents are potentially smaller.** The formatting is separate and should cause the document to be smaller.
- **Site maintenance is easier.** If the styles need to be changed, it's possible to complete the modifications by changing only the style sheet file.

## Methods of Configuring CSS:

- **Inline styles** are coded in the body of the Web page as an attribute of an HTML tag. The style only applies to the specific element that contains it as an attribute.
- **Embedded styles** are defined in the head section of a Web page. These style instructions apply to the entire Web page document
- **External (linked) styles** are coded in a separate text file, called an external style sheet. This text file is associated with a Web page by coding a link element in the head section.

## Style Rule Basics:

Style sheets are composed of rules that describe the styling to be applied. Each rule has two parts: a selector and a declaration.

- **Rule Selector**

The selector can be an HTML element name, a class name, an ID name, or a combination of these.

- **Rule Declaration**

The declaration indicates the CSS property you are setting (such as color) and the value (such as black) you are assigning to the property.

## Class Selector

- When you need to apply a CSS declaration to a certain set of elements on a Web page and not necessarily tie the style to a particular element, it is best to use a class selector.
- The styles set in the new class can be applied to any element.
- Class selector names always start with a period.

## ID Selector

- To identify and apply a CSS rule to a single area, use an ID selector.
- Utilize an ID selector to configure a single element on a Web page.
- ID selector names always start with a pound sign.

## Contextual Selector

- When you want to specify an element with the context of its container (parent) element, use a contextual selector.
- These selectors are also considered compound selectors.



# HTML

HTML stands for hypertext markup language. HTML is the programming language, or code, used to create pages on the Web. Originally, HTML was typed into Windows Notepad or Winpad and saved as a .htm or .html file extension to create a Web page. Today, we utilize HTML editors, such as Adobe Dreamweaver, to generate the HTML code for us.

HTML codes are sometimes called tags. Codes are placed inside a “container tag” or “bracket.” Tags are usually nested, for example, all the code for a Web page must be placed inside the <html></html> tag. When you see a slash mark inside the bracket (</>) it means “close the tag.” Below are some basic HTML tags:

<!DOCTYPE>.....	Version of (X)HTML
<html>.....	HTML document
<head>.....	Page information
<body>.....	Page contents
<meta />.....	Meta data
<title>.....	Title
<link />.....	Relevant resource
<style>.....	Style resource
<h[1-6]>.....	Heading
<div>.....	Page section
<p>.....	Paragraph
<a href="">.....	Page link
<a href="mailto:">.....	Email link
<strong>.....	Strong emphasis
<em>.....	Emphasis
<blockquote>.....	Long quotation
<ol>.....	Ordered list
<table>.....	Table
<img src="">.....	Graphic/photos

## Resources:

Adobe Dreamweaver CS5

Telg, R. & Irani, T. (2012). *Agricultural Communications: A Hands-On Approach*. Clifton Park, NY: Cengage/Delmar Publishing.



# Social Media Strategy

Social media should be planned just as other communications tactics. Simply having a Facebook page and posting on occasion is no longer considered a true plan. A social media plan should be organized with a target audience, specific social mediums in mind, and a plan for execution.

Social media allows for engagement and two way conversations with the organization and target audience. The target audience is able to participate with the product/event/campaign/etc. Social media allows for increased awareness, traffic, sales, and drives consumers to websites to further gain knowledge about the product/event/campaign/etc.

## Social Media Plan Components

The following components should be included in a social media plan:

### 1. Target Audience

- Who is the audience your social media plan strives to reach?
- What are the demographics (age, gender, race, etc) of your target audience?
- What is the geographic (local, county, regional, national, etc) outreach of your target audience?

### 2. Purpose of Social Media

- What is the point of using social media to promote this event?
- Why is social media a valid method for reaching your target audience?
- Do you even need to use social media? Why?
- What do you hope to accomplish by using social media?

### 3. Social Media to be Used

- There is more to social media than Facebook and Twitter. What else do you plan to use?
- Why are your chosen social media sites the best ones to reach your audience?
- How do you intend to use each medium?

### 4. Content of Pages

- What will each medium's page look like?
- What tools/tabs/pages/apps/etc do you intend to use?
- What photos, if any, will you have on the site? Where will you put them (profile picture, background images, photo albums, etc)?

### 5. Key Messages

- What is the key message you intend to communicate? (Keep in mind, you may have secondary messages as well, but what will your site be used to





communicate for the most part?)

- Different media may be conducive to different messages. Describe the key message on each medium.

## 6. Frequency of Posts

- A good social media plan will spell out how often you intend to post to each site.
- What is your logic behind this decision?
- Do you intend to post more frequently as you get closer to the event? Provide a brief timeline that explains frequency and content of posts as the event draws near. Explain your reasoning.

## 7. Plan to Gain Followers

- Social media is pointless unless you have friends/followers/fans/connections/etc.
- How will you get people to add you into their social networks?

## 8. Other Considerations

- How do you plan to respond to unfavorable posts?
- Do you want to re-post content from other sites? What will your policy be on commenting on these posts?
- What is your policy for deleting posts/disabling comment boxes?
- When does something deserve a direct response?

Below demonstrates the hopeful outcomes of a social media campaign.



**Impress:** You should make a good first impression by doing research to understand your consumers.

**Influence:** Who are the key influencers for your product? How many followers do you have? What do they say about you?

**Engage:** How are people engaged in your social media efforts? Count comments, replies, re-tweets, etc. Who else linked to your blog? Engaged people will write quality comments and participate in community discussions.

**Action:** What gets measured gets improved. Actions lead to outcomes.

Popular social media sites include:

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogging, Flickr, MySpace, LinkedIn, Pinterest



# Ethical Considerations

Communications involves ethical choices. The field of agricultural communications is no different. Further, our field is a relatively small one. It will be in your best interest to conduct yourself in an ethical manner if you plan to work in this field long.

The duty of print and broadcast journalists is to seek truth and provide a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Graphic designers provide material which is accurate, striving not to oversimplify or mislead while being as clear as possible. In public relations, one may strive to present material in the best possible light, but the information still should be true. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a communicator's credibility.

## General Ethical Principles

- Communicators should not permit or engage in plagiarism.
- They should treat sources, subjects, colleagues and clients with respect.
- They should show compassion to people for whom or about whom they are communicating, especially in regard to children.
- They should avoid real or perceived conflicts of interests.
- Communicators should admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
- Communicators should not accept unethical practices of themselves or others.

## Print and Broadcast Journalists

- Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.
- Journalists should be honest and fair in reporting information.
- They make sure the information they report is accurate.
- They should work to prevent errors in reporting.
- Journalists should allow private people a greater privacy and control of information about themselves than people who are seeking the public limelight or public officials.
- They should ensure stories, teasers, sound bites, headlines and quotations are accurate and do not mislead or misrepresent the sources.
- Journalists should not participate in re-enactments or staged news events without making it explicitly clear to the reader/listener/viewer the event was re-enacted or staged for illustration purposes.
- Journalists should not take gifts, favors, fees or free travel.
- They should not take second jobs or become involved personally in politics.



## Graphic Design

- Graphic designers must make sure the information they are presenting is accurate, as well as easily understood.
- Graphic designers should not edit or crop a photo in a way eliminating a major flaw in the subject.
- They should not “fix” photos using software which alters the picture significantly. For example, one should not correct the stance of an animal, but may be able to clean off a dirt spot.
- They should be careful not to misinterpret data.
- With charts, the designer should show the entire scale.
- When a graphic compares two products or sources, the designer should make sure the comparison is appropriate (apples to apples and oranges to oranges).

## Public Relations

- Public relations practitioners must not present false or misleading information.
- They should avoid extravagant claims or inappropriate comparisons.
- They should not guarantee results not within their control.
- They need to identify the person or organization for which the communication was conducted.
- Public relations practitioners must protect confidential information.
- They should not present information not in the public’s interest.
- They should not provide media travel not related to legitimate news coverage or gifts worth more than a nominal value.

These principles were developed with reference to those established by the Society of Professional Journalists and the Public Relations Society of America.



# Appendix A

## Frequently Misspelled Words

For additional spelling assistance, consult *Working With Words*, by Brooks and Pinson.

- |                    |                 |                   |                                  |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. admissible      | 26. definite    | 51. Holstein      | 76. picnic                       |
| 2. adviser         | 27. desirable   | 52. hygiene       | 77. plaque                       |
| 3. agriculture     | 28. develop     | 53. illiterate    | 78. potato                       |
| 4. all right       | 29. dietitian   | 54. immediate     | 79. preventive                   |
| 5. anonymous       | 30. disappear   | 55. incline       | 80. proficiency                  |
| 6. antibiotics     | 31. drought     | 56. infectious    | 81. Quarter Horse                |
| 7. artificial      | 32. Duroc       | 57. infertility   | 82. questionnaire                |
| 8. assessment      | 33. eighth      | 58. inoculate     | 83. receive                      |
| 9. attendance      | 34. eliminate   | 59. integrate     | 84. rhythm                       |
| 10. believable     | 35. embarrass   | 60. irrelevant    | 85. Salers                       |
| 11. benefit        | 36. environment | 61. irresistible  | 86. similar                      |
| 12. calcium        | 37. excessive   | 62. judgment      | 87. sincerely                    |
| 13. calendar       | 38. February    | 63. license       | 88. sodium                       |
| 14. cemetery       | 39. foreign     | 64. Limousin      | 89. syrup                        |
| 15. census         | 40. forty       | 65. maintenance   | 90. their, there, they're        |
| 16. changeable     | 41. fourth      | 66. mastitis      | 91. Thoroughbred                 |
| 17. Charolais      | 42. gauge       | 67. miniature     | 92. through                      |
| 18. commitment     | 43. goodbye     | 68. miscellaneous | 93. tomato                       |
| 19. committee      | 44. government  | 69. misspelled    | 94. tomorrow                     |
| 20. communications | 45. grammar     | 70. necessary     | 95. toward                       |
| 21. conceive       | 46. Guernsey    | 71. noticeable    | 96. until                        |
| 22. consensus      | 47. Hampshire   | 72. occurred      | 97. usable                       |
| 23. consumable     | 48. heifer      | 73. opportunity   | 98. vaccine                      |
| 24. convenience    | 49. hemorrhage  | 74. original      | 99. veterinary                   |
| 25. curriculum     | 50. herbicides  | 75. pesticides    | 100. whether, weather,<br>wether |



# Appendix B

## EDITING MARKS

<p>¶ ATLANTA (AP)—The organization said Thursday. <u>It was the first the last attempts.</u></p>	<p>indent for paragraph paragraph no paragraph</p>
<p>↳ With this the president tried</p>	
<p>the <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">Jones</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">Smith</span> company is not</p>	<p>transpose</p>
<p>over a period of <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 0 2px;">sixty</span> or more years</p>	<p>use figures</p>
<p>there were <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 0 2px;">9</span> in the group.</p>	<p>spell it out</p>
<p>Ada, <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 0 2px;">Oklahoma</span> is the hometown</p>	<p>abbreviate</p>
<p>The <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 0 2px;">Ga</span> man was the guest of</p>	<p>don't abbreviate</p>
<p>prince edward said it was his</p>	<p>uppercase</p>
<p>as a result <del>h</del>is will be</p>	<p>lowercase</p>
<p>the <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 0 2px;">a</span>cuser pointed to them</p>	<p>remove space</p>
<p>In <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">t</span>hese times it is necessary</p>	<p>insert space</p>
<p>the order for the <sup>stat</sup> <del>later</del> devices</p>	<p>retain</p>
<p>The ruling <sup>is</sup> a fine example</p>	<p>insert word</p>
<p>according to the <del>his</del> source</p>	<p>delete</p>
<p><b>BF</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">By DONALD AMES</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">]</span></p>	<p>boldface, center</p>
<p>J.R. Thomas <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">]</span></p>	<p>flush right</p>
<p><span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">[</span>J.R. Thomas</p>	<p>flush left</p>
<p>↗</p>	<p>insert comma</p>
<p>↘</p>	<p>insert apostrophe</p>
<p>↵ ↶</p>	<p>insert quotation marks</p>
<p>⊗ or ⊙</p>	<p>insert period</p>
<p>=</p>	<p>hyphen</p>
<p>—</p>	<p>dash</p>



# Appendix C

## Sample Agricultural Communications Edition Quiz

Instructions: Twenty five words or phrases are underlined in the news release below. Come are correct and others contain errors. Indicate in the spaces to the right if the words or phrases are correct (C) or incorrect (I). If they are incorrect, correct them using standard editing marks. You may find errors related to grammar, punctuation, word usage, spelling and other Associated Press style issues.

### India cements rising star status in world cotton production

By Norman Martin  
TTU CASNR NewsCenter

1	India became the <u>2<sup>nd</sup></u> largest cotton producer in the world two years ago, and	1.
2	annual forecasts by <u>TTU</u> agricultural economists predict it will remain	2.
3	in that position for <u>years</u> ; <u>climbing</u> to 25.3 million acres in the next decade, up from	3.
4	23.1 million <u>acres now</u> .	4.
5	<u>“US</u> cotton growers competing with India for profitable Chinese markets are	5.
6	finding a changing <u>playing-field</u> as technology and improved productivity continue to	6.
7	push <u>India’s cotton yeilds upward</u> ,” said <u>Darren Hudson</u> , director of Texas Tech’s	7.
8	Cotton Economics Research <u>Institute (CERI)</u> .	8.
9	<u>Today China</u> leads the world cotton production with India and the United States at	9.
10	<u>second &amp; third, respectively</u> . Over the next 10 years, China’s share of world cotton	10.
11	production is expected to <u>decline by 3 % while</u> India is forecasted to increase by	11.
12	<u>2</u> .	12.
13	<u>“Harvested cotton area in India is projected to jump do to the high net return in</u>	13.
14	<u>cotton and high minimum</u> support prices recently announced by the Indian	14.
15	<u>government”</u> , <u>Hudson</u> said.	15.
16	As a result of the faltering <u>global economy demand for textile</u> products dwindled	16.
17	and cotton prices began to tumble last fall. <u>In response, India government</u> increased	17.
18	the minimum support price it provides its cotton farmers <u>by 35 to 45 percent</u> .	18.
19	India’s production gains are projected to come from <u>both increased areas, and</u>	19.
20	improved yields. The upward trend <u>in yield are projected</u> to continue as more Bt	20.
21	<u>Cotton Varieties</u> are approved for cultivation, as varieties are adopted to a wider range	21.
22	of <u>cotton growing</u> areas, and as utilization rates increase.	22.
23	<u>“One of the things</u> that has been responsible for the tremendous increase in cotton	23.
24	production in India has been <u>there</u> rapid and overwhelming acceptance of the new	24.
25	<u>Genetically Engineered Varieties</u> of cotton,” said Norman Hopper, Texas Tech’s	25.



Associate Dean and Piper Professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

In 2003, India was a net importer of cotton despite having the world's largest planting acreage. While the nation might have planted a lot of cotton, it also had one of the world's lowest yields per acre. Six years later, India's cotton yields have soared, thanks largely to the introduction of Bt cotton.

Bt crops have been genetically altered to produce toxins that kill some insects. The toxins are produced in nature by the widespread bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, hence the abbreviation Bt.

CERI produces its estimates annually in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri and Iowa State University, as well as the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University. The institute releases annual 10-year forecasts for each of the major agricultural crops as well as farm income.

-End of Editing Exercise-



# Sample Agricultural Communications Edition Quiz

## Answers

### India cements rising star status in world cotton production

By Norman Martin  
TTU CASNR NewsCenter

1	India became the <u>2<sup>nd</sup></u> largest cotton producer in the world two years ago, and	1. spell out
2	annual forecasts by <u>TTU</u> agricultural economists predict it will remain	2. Write out
3	in that position for <u>years; climbing</u> to 25.3 million acres in the next decade, up from	3. comma, not SC
4	23.1 million <u>acres now</u> .	4. okay
5	<u>“US</u> cotton growers competing with India for profitable Chinese markets are	5. add periods
6	finding a changing <u>playing-field</u> as technology and improved productivity continue to	6. remove -
7	push <u>India’s cotton yeilds upward,”</u> said Darren Hudson, director of Texas Tech’s	7. yields
8	Cotton Economics Research <u>Institute (CERI)</u> .	8. okay
9	<u>Today China</u> leads the world cotton production with India and the United States at	9. add comma
10	<u>second &amp; third, respectively</u> . Over the next 10 years, China’s share of world cotton	10. write out and
11	production is expected to <u>decline by 3 % while</u> India is forecasted to increase by	11. write “percent”
12	<u>2.</u>	12. add “percent”
13	<u>“Harvested cotton area in India is projected to jump do to the high net return in</u>	13. do = due
14	<u>cotton and high minimum</u> support prices recently announced by the Indian	14. okay
15	<u>government”</u> , Hudson said.	15. swtich , “
16	As a result of the faltering <u>global economy demand for textile</u> products dwindled	16. add comma
17	and cotton prices began to tumble last fall. <u>In response, India government</u> increased	17. add “s”
18	the minimum support price it provides its cotton farmers <u>by 35 to 45 percent</u> .	18. add percent
19	India’s production gains are projected to come from <u>both increased areas, and</u>	19. remove comma
20	improved yields. The upward trend in <u>yield are projected</u> to continue as more Bt	20. are = is
21	<u>Cotton Varieties</u> are approved for cultivation, as varieties are adopted to a wider range	21. lower case
22	of <u>cotton growing</u> areas, and as utilization rates increase.	22. okay
23	<u>“One of the things</u> that has been responsible for the tremendous increase in cotton	23. okay
24	production in India has been <u>there</u> rapid and overwhelming acceptance of the new	24. their
25	<u>Genetically Engineered Varieties</u> of cotton,” said Norman Hopper, Texas Tech’s	25. lowercase

Associate Dean and Piper Professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.





Associate Dean and Piper Professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

In 2003, India was a net importer of cotton despite having the world's largest planting acreage. While the nation might have planted a lot of cotton, it also had one of the world's lowest yields per acre. Six years later, India's cotton yields have soared, thanks largely to the introduction of Bt cotton.

Bt crops have been genetically altered to produce toxins that kill some insects. The toxins are produced in nature by the widespread bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, hence the abbreviation Bt.

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# Appendix D

## Sample Agricultural Communications Quiz

**Instructions:** This quiz covers basic items related to agricultural communications, such as style, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, word usage and ethics. There are 25 questions, valued at one point each.

---

**Multiple Choice (10 questions):** Choose the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_ 1. Which of the following states is INCORRECTLY abbreviated?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A. Principle Tower<br>8301 Grand Ave.<br>Des Moines, IA 50301 | B. The Texas Ranger was from<br>Hamilton, Tex.   |
| C. The skier hurt her knee in Aspen,<br>Colo.                 | D. The firefighters worked diligently to<br>extinguish the blaze before it burned all<br>of Massachusetts. |

\_\_\_\_ 2. At the bottom of a press release many reporters include a \_\_\_\_\_, which contains background information about the company or organization for which the press release is being written.

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| A. contact line | B. boilerplate |
| C. date line    | D. # # #       |

\_\_\_\_ 3. A \_\_\_\_\_ story deals with people, focusing on specific but unusual achievements or events.

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| A. filler  | B. column |
| C. feature | D. news   |

\_\_\_\_ 4. Identify the CORRECTLY capitalized choice:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. The donated land was near the<br>River.         | B. Main, Elm and Iowa Streets all are<br>in need of repair after the hard winter.      |
| C. The chapter banquet was held<br>on Main street. | D. Members from the Democratic,<br>Republican and Green parties were in<br>attendance. |

\_\_\_\_ 5. Identify the correctly spelled choice:

The opposite of lowercase letters are \_\_\_\_\_ letters.; A building in which the U.S. Congress meets is the \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| A. Capital, Capitol | B. Capitol, Capital                              |
| C. Capital, Capital | D. None of the above, they are all<br>incorrect. |



\_\_\_ 6. Which of the following is CORRECT?

- A. The wind was out of the West.
- B. That young man had a southern accent.
- C. The graduate student from the Midwest was very talented.
- D. The ice storm that hit Iowa was headed Eastward.

\_\_\_ 7. Which of the following is CORRECT?

- A. The teacher instructed the students to use the Internet to find the correct answer.
- B. The Internet can be a useful tool. In fact, the Net is one of the most commonly cited sources of information.
- C. For more information go to <http://www.ttu.edu>.
- D. All of the above are correct.

\_\_\_ 8. Identify the ellipsis:

- A. . . .
- B. ( )
- C. { }
- D. \*

\_\_\_ 9. Which of the following is INCORRECT?

- A. Web site
- B. World Wide Web
- C. website
- D. webcam

\_\_\_ 10. The \_\_\_\_\_ sentence in a photo caption provides background on news and shows significance of the photo.

- A. fourth
- B. only
- C. starter
- D. second

### TRUE OR FALSE

*If the statement is true, mark T in the blank to the left of the item. If it is false, place F in the blank.*

- \_\_\_ 11. "Mispelled" is spelled correctly.
- \_\_\_ 12. The date in this sentence is abbreviated correctly. "The livestock show is on Mar. 30, 2009."
- \_\_\_ 13. This sentence is properly capitalized. "Agriculture commissioner Todd Staples said the drought is costing Texas agriculture nearly \$1 billion."
- \_\_\_ 14. This sentence is abbreviated correctly. "Tom Vilsack is the secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture."



- \_\_\_ 15. Writers should mention an organization's name in full the first time mentioned in news stories.
- \_\_\_ 16. This sentence is properly capitalized. "Students will attend the 81st Annual Texas FFA Convention."
- \_\_\_ 17. The approved format for writing a numbered address in news writing is 101 S. Third St.
- \_\_\_ 18. "Thoroughbred" is spelled correctly.
- \_\_\_ 19. This sentence is hyphenated correctly. "The vice-president of the Texas Farm Bureau visited Texas Tech University."
- \_\_\_ 20. In news writing, the approved abbreviation for Texas is TX.
- \_\_\_ 21. "Hemorrhage" is spelled correctly.
- \_\_\_ 22. Write out the days of the week in news writing.
- \_\_\_ 23. This sentence is punctuated correctly. "Research in wind energy might bring new economic opportunities to residents in the Panhandle," Ayers said.
- \_\_\_ 24. "Wheather" is spelled correctly.
- \_\_\_ 25. This sentence is punctuated correctly. "FFA'ers participated in the Agricultural Communications Career Development Event in Lubbock, Texas."

-End of Quiz-



# Sample Agricultural Communications Quiz Answers

**Multiple Choice (10 questions):** Choose the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_1. Which of the following states is INCORRECTLY abbreviated? (Page 162)

A. Principle Tower  
8301 Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50301

**B. The Texas Ranger was from  
Hamilton, Tex.**

C. The skier hurt her knee in Aspen,  
Colo.

D. The firefighters worked diligently to  
extinguish the blaze before it burned all  
of Massachusetts.

- a) Use the two letter Postal Service abbreviations only with full addresses, including a ZIP code.
- b) The names of eight states are never abbreviated in datelines of in text. Spell out the names of the two states that are not part of the contiguous United States and of the continental states that are five letters or less. (Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah).
- c) Use the state abbreviations...in conjunction with the name of a city, county, town, village or military base in text.
- d) Spell out the names of states when they stand alone in textual material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical requirements for tabular material.

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\_\_\_\_2. At the bottom of a press release many reporters include a \_\_\_\_\_, which contains background information about the company or organization for which the press release is being written.

A. contact line

**B. boilerplate**

C. date line

D. # # #

\_\_\_\_3. A \_\_\_\_\_ story deals with people, focusing on specific but unusual achievements or events.

A. filler

B. column

**C. feature**

D. news



.....  
\_\_\_\_ 4. Identify the CORRECTLY capitalized choice:

- A. The donated land was near the River.      B. Main, Elm and Iowa Streets all are in need of repair after the hard winter.  
C. The chapter banquet was held on Main street.      **D. Members from the Democratic, Republican and Green parties were in attendance.**

- a) Capitalize common nouns (such as river) when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing. Lowercase them when they stand alone in subsequent references.  
b) Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses.  
c) see "a)"  
d) see "b)"

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.....

\_\_\_\_ 5. Identify the correctly spelled choice:

The opposite of lowercase letters are \_\_\_\_\_ letters.; A building in which the US Congress meets is the \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Capital, Capitol**      B. Capitol, Capital  
C. Capital, Capital      D. None of the above, they are all incorrect.

*Capitol refers to buildings and capital is for any other use. 2011 AP Stylebook page 43 and 45.*  
.....

\_\_\_\_ 6. Which of the following is CORRECT?

- A. The wind was out of the West.      B. That young man had a southern accent.  
**C. The graduate student from the Midwest was very talented.**      D. The ice storm that hit Iowa was headed Eastward.

*In general, lowercase north, south, east, northern, etc., when they indicate compass direction; capitalize these words when they designate regions. Page 85-86 AP Stylebook 2011*  
.....

\_\_\_\_ 7. Which of the following is CORRECT?

- A. The teacher instructed the students to use the Internet to find the correct answer.      B. The Internet can be a useful tool. In fact, the Net is one of the most commonly cited sources of information.  
C. For more information go to: <http://www.ttu.edu>.      **D. All of the above are correct.**

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.....



.....  
\_\_\_\_ 8. Identify the ellipsis:

A. ...

B. ()

C. {}

D. \*

*Page 375 AP Stylebook 2011*  
.....

\_\_\_\_ 9. Which of the following is INCORRECT?

A. **Web site**

B. World Wide Web

C. website

D. webcam

*Page 302 AP Stylebook 2011*  
.....

\_\_\_\_ 10. The \_\_\_\_\_ sentence in a photo caption provides background on news and shows significance of the photo.

A. fourth

B. **only**

C. starter

D. second

## TRUE OR FALSE

*If the statement is true, mark T in the blank to the left of the item. If it is false, place F in the blank.*

- F 1. "Mispelled" is spelled correctly.
- F 2. The date in this sentence is abbreviated correctly. "The livestock show is on Mar. 30, 2009."
- F 3. This sentence is properly capitalized. "Agriculture commissioner Todd Staples said the drought is costing Texas agriculture nearly \$1 billion."
- T 4. This sentence is abbreviated correctly. "Tom Vilsack is the secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture."
- T 5. Writers should mention an organization's name in full the first time mentioned in news stories.
- F 6. This sentence is properly capitalized. "Students will attend the 81st Annual Texas FFA Convention."
- T 7. The approved format for writing a numbered address in news writing is 101 S. Third St.
- T 8. "Thoroughbred" is spelled correctly.
- F 9. This sentence is hyphenated correctly. "The vice-president of the Texas Farm Bureau visited Texas Tech University."
- F 10. In news writing, the approved abbreviation for Texas is TX.
- F 11. "Hemorhage" is spelled correctly.
- T 12. Write out the days of the week in news writing.
- T 13. This sentence is punctuated correctly. "Research in wind energy might bring new economic opportunities to residents in the Panhandle," Ayers said.
- F 14. "Wheather" is spelled correctly.
- T 15. This sentence is punctuated correctly. "FFA'ers participated in the Agricultural Communications Career Development Event in Lubbock, Texas."

