

## Unit Overview

We believe that your visit to the Newseum, along with this unit of study on photojournalism ethics, will help you and your students better understand the guidelines and principles photojournalists use to report stories. We believe this knowledge will help students better understand the role of the free press and become more informed and critical news consumers.

By actively participating in this unit, including pre-visit activities, a Newseum experience and post-visit activities, students will come to understand the three guiding principles of photojournalism: fairness, accuracy and clarity. Students become editors and reporters and grapple with real-life ethical decisions that photojournalists are faced with every day.

Our guiding question in this unit — **What principles guide how photojournalists work?** — engenders a number of additional questions that will be good to keep in mind as you take advantage of your Newseum visit:

**What principles guide photojournalists? What does it mean to be honest and clear in capturing images? To be fair and accurate? What images are published and why?**

- **Why are photographs such powerful storytellers?**
- **What standards do photojournalists use when reporting?**
- **What makes a photograph “good”?**
- **How has photojournalism changed events in America and the world?**
- **How are issues of bias and fair reporting addressed by photojournalists?**
- **What do the photographs chosen by newspapers tell us about our communities, our values and our views?**

We appreciate your willingness to share with your students the benefits of viewing, hearing, reading and touching the elements of the First Amendment through which the Newseum brings history to life.

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

## National Standards of Learning

National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for U.S. History (5-12)

Content:	Standard
<b>The student understands contemporary American culture.</b> 7-12 Explain the influence of media on contemporary American culture. [Explain historical continuity and change]	Era 10 Standard 2D

Center for Civic Education, National Standards for Civics and Government Grades 5-8:

Content:	Standard
<b>The public agenda.</b> Students should be able to explain what is meant by the public agenda and how it is set.	III.F.1.

Grades 9-12:

Content:	Standard
<b>The public agenda.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about how the public agenda is set.	III.E.1.
<b>Public opinion and behavior of the electorate.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the role of public opinion in American politics.	III.E.2.
<b>Political communication: television, radio, the press, and political persuasion.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.	III.E.3.
<b>Forms of political participation.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the means that citizens should use to monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policy.	V.E.3.

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

## National Council for the Social Studies, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Middle Grades:

Content:	Standard
b. explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference	(I) Culture
g. apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good	(V) Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

## High School:

Content:	Standard
b. predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference	(I) Culture
e. investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgment	(II) Time, Continuity, & Change
g. analyze the extent to which groups and institutions meet individual needs and promote the common good in contemporary and historical settings	(V) Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

## National Council of Teachers of English: Standards for the English Language Arts

Content:	Standard
Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).	3
Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	4
Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).	12

## Pre-Visit Activities

Dear Educator,

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your class to the Newseum for the Photo Ethics school program. These four quick activities will introduce your students to some of the topics and concepts we will explore together in more depth during the visit.

Enclosed you will find the following activities:

- **Photojournalism Vocabulary**
- **A Photojournalist's Code of Ethics**
- **Meet a Photo Editor**
- **Today's Front Page Photographs**

We hope these activities help you and your students get excited about your upcoming field trip. We'll see you soon!

Newseum Education Staff

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Photojournalism Vocabulary

**Directions:** Below are some terms that have to do with photojournalism and making ethical choices as a journalist. Select three terms to research. Find out what these terms mean in relation to photojournalism. Create your own definitions for the three terms. Then try to find examples of these terms (photographs that illustrate the term or the different standards and codes) in newspapers, on television and on Internet news sites.

- Angle (low, middle, high)
- Candid
- Captions/cutlines
- Codes of ethics
- Composition
- Credibility
- Crop
- Concept illustration
- Ethics
- False light
- Graphic
- Journalistic standards
- Offensive material
- Photo illustration
- Photo manipulation
- Posed or staged
- Rule of thirds
- Sensationalism

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## A Photojournalist's Code of Ethics

**Directions:** Read the National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics printed below. Pick one of the standards and find examples of photographs that do and do not comply with the ethical standards. Look for examples in newspapers, magazines and online. Find five examples and write a brief paragraph about each explaining why it shows the standard being implemented or shows a lack of the standard. Be sure to attach examples to your writing.

### National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.
4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
5. While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.
6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
8. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.

## Meet a Photo Editor

**What is the job of the photo editor?**

**How does the photo editor select the best photograph to use on the front page?**

Invite the photo editor from your local newspaper to meet with your class, student media photographers and videographers and photography students in your school.

Before the visit, have students brainstorm questions they will ask. Select five to eight students to ask one of their questions to begin the interview portion of the class visit. If you have a broadcast program in your school, you may wish to tape this visit.

**Questions might include:**



- Are you involved in the brainstorming stage of a story?
- Do you select all of the photographs that appear in the daily newspaper and on the newspaper's Web site?
- What percentage of the photography in your newspaper comes from wire services? Why does your newspaper use a wire service?
- How much turnaround time does a photographer have?
- Who handles the cropping of photos?
- Who handles the pre-press editing and color correction of the photos?
- Is all photography digital? Does anyone work in a darkroom anymore?
- How has "going digital" influenced your newspaper's photography? For example, have you had more images from which to select? Has sports coverage been influenced? Have expenses been reduced?
- How is breaking news handled by photographers? Are they paired with reporters?
- What training did you have for your job? What training and classes do you recommend for someone who wants to be a news photographer or videographer?

## Today's Front Page Photographs: Images From Across America and Around the World

A front page, and the photographs and images chosen for the front page, can reveal as much about a newspaper and its community as it does about the day's news. Some days, one story dominates front pages across the country or even around the world. But often the stories on Page One reflect communities with different interests. Likewise, the images chosen for front pages reflect the values and views of the diverse communities from which these papers come.

More than 600 newspapers transmit their front pages electronically to the Newseum every day. All of the front pages received each day are available online at [newseum.org/todaysfrontpages](http://newseum.org/todaysfrontpages).

These front pages can be used in your classroom in a variety of ways. Following are some easy activities, with some questions to ask when considering the photographs on the front pages of newspapers.



- How are the images similar? How are they different?
- How many photographs are on each front page?
- Are the photographs about local, national or international news?
- What can these photographs tell us about what this community values?

### Images of Breaking News Across the World

Look at images from around the country when a big story breaks or when there are major developing stories, such as campaigns, elections, tax changes, recession or impending storms. Print out a variety of front pages from small, medium and large cities and discuss as a class the images that were chosen for the story in different places.

### "A Week in Fabulous ..."

Select a "sister" community to follow for a week or longer through their front pages. Consider choosing a community that is markedly different from that of your students — rural/urban, suburban/rural, large/small, North/South/East/West, etc. Each day, print out the front pages from your sister city and compare them to the front pages of your local newspaper.

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

## Hometown News

If you and your students live in a community with more than one daily paper, conduct a weeklong (or longer) analysis of what each paper covers through photographs. Either print out the front pages from the Newseum Web site or purchase the papers for a week. Most newspapers will gladly donate copies of their papers for classroom use. Be sure to focus on the images each paper selected for similar stories.

## What Does a Photograph Say?

Bring in newspapers from a week or more and post them around the room. Ask students to review each page. Questions to guide them may include:



- Which of the front pages do they find most interesting? Is this because of the headlines, topics covered, content of the stories, layout or photographs?
- Which front page has the best photograph?
- What qualities make this the best photograph?

The front page photograph should be a “good” picture technically and should convey an accurate message. The photograph and its caption should help to tell the story just as the headline and lead summarize it. The role of photography should not be underestimated.



- Select one of the front page photographs. Read the story that accompanies it.
- Ask students to write a quick summary of the story.
- After some students have shared their summaries, write the key elements of the story on the board.
- Read the caption and look at the photograph. Does the caption “restate” the summary or does it communicate another element of the whole story?
- How does the photograph tell the story? Add dimension to the text? Supply an emotional element to the story?

## Post-Visit Activities

Dear Educator,

We hope you enjoyed your recent visit to the Newseum. Attached please find eight case studies that will help to further the conversation about photo ethics your students began at the Newseum. All of these case studies deal with student publications and photo ethics. These can be discussed as a class or assigned as homework. Consider using the same group discussion format used at the Newseum. We hope these situations help extend the experience and allow you to apply concepts that were presented in the Photo Ethics lesson.

Newseum Education Staff

## To Publish or Not to Publish 1

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

There is said to be a “breakfast rule” to guide publication decisions: Do not publish anything that will make people choke on their breakfast.

### Situation

Parents in your community are calling and writing the local newspaper. They are angry about two recent uses of photographs in the morning newspaper:

1. Three American troops and 10 Iraqi citizens, including two children, were killed when a car bomb exploded in a shopping district. On the front page of the Tuesday paper was a photograph that clearly showed the uncovered bodies, blood and damage to cars and shops.
2. On Wednesday, on the back of the comics page, a full-page advertisement for women's undergarments was published. Some considered the poses “seductive” and “far too revealing.” Children who read the comics might see the ad.



- Do you think public response should guide the decision to publish or not publish more than news value? Are the subscribers right to complain?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 2

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

Not all actions are news. Editors, reporters and photographers make content decisions every day based on their news judgment, understanding of their communities and awareness of their ethical, legal and economic responsibilities.

### Situation

Students at your school are performing dangerous stunts. They hope to attract television coverage and get the most hits on YouTube. The editor of the student newspaper and the student webmaster are pitching coverage. They think this story would interest students who do not usually read the school's newspaper.



- Should your school's publications cover the students with photographs and/or do a videocast?
- Would this encourage these students to do more daring stunts by glorifying their unsafe actions?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 3

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

Photographers are to maintain the integrity of the photographic image's content and context. Photographers also want their best works to be published.

### Situation

Your school photographer captured an awesome crowd photograph just as your girls basketball team won the state championship. All aspects of an excellent photograph — emotion, color, use of line and rule of thirds — are present. On closer examination, one sees several students with their middle fingers extended.



- Would you remove the offending body parts using a software program such as Photoshop?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish as is?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 4

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

A photo illustration is not a news photograph and should be clearly labeled as an illustration so viewers are not misled. It may be set up in a photo studio or created through digital manipulation. Photo illustrations are used often in fashion, food and product photographs.

### Situation

Your student newspaper is planning a feature on the importance of body image. You have downloaded photographs of well-known stars. You believe your readers will understand that this is a feature and not a news story.



- Is there anything wrong with using the downloaded images of the stars to illustrate your story?
- Is it OK to place the faces of members of the faculty, administration and student government on these bodies? The images will be labeled as photo illustrations.
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 5

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

Fairness and balance in reporting give involved parties the opportunity to express their points of view and explain their actions. Photographic images should not be used to mislead readers or misrepresent subjects.

### Situation

A staff photographer and another member of the student body took pictures of the school cafeteria after everyone had left a school-sponsored spaghetti dinner. This event raised funds for academic field trips, including a trip to a national high school journalism convention for school publications staff. The photos showed rats under tables and mold that was caused by dripping water from a leaky pipe.

The newspaper deadline is in three days. Staff members and the assistant editor in charge of layout and photography want these pictures published in the next issue of the newspaper. The nonstaff photographer says she will put the images on MySpace if the school's newspaper won't run them. The assistant editor thinks the pictures and captions should run without a story or comments from the cafeteria director, head custodian or principal. The editor does not think there is enough information to publish.



- Do you think the students and their parents have a right to know about conditions in the school cafeteria?
- Does the school media have a responsibility to confirm this as an ongoing problem that is either being addressed or neglected?
- Is it the media's role to inform the school community, or should the media first inform the people who might institute change?
- Would you run the pictures with only captions and no story?
- Would you run the story without interviewing the cafeteria director, head custodian or principal?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 6

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

One of the basic principles that guide a free press: The press has a commitment to the truth. It reports news; it does not make news. It should maintain an independence from those it covers.

### Situation

At your school, it is a 20-year-old annual tradition for a male student to streak across the field after the homecoming football game. Each year, a different student wears a mask and dashes across the gridiron in front of alumni, parents and students.

It has been three years since a streaking student has been caught.

This year, your editor-in-chief captures the moment on a digital camera. The picture is a side shot that does not reveal front or rear anatomy. The stadium crowd is laughing as the stalker gets tackled by security.



- Would you print the side shot image of the stalker?
- Would you print the image of the stalker being caught by security?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

### After the Decision Is Made

Would you change your decision based on the following background information? The school is not a public school. It is a private, Christian school in rural Virginia. Nearly 500 students in grades seven through 12 attend the school. The stalker is also on the newspaper staff. The editor-in-chief swears he had no prior knowledge of the incident and was not tipped off before the game.

- Does this information about the student body change your decision to publish or not publish the photograph(s)?
- Does the stalker's position on the newspaper staff influence your decision?

## To Publish or Not to Publish 7

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

Photographers are to maintain the integrity of the photographic image's content and context.

### Situation

The journalism department at your school has been asked to create a four-color, snazzy brochure that touts the strength of your academic, athletic and arts programs. The brochure will be mass distributed to boost the image of your school. For the cover shot, you found a group photo of students at a football game that you believe represents the school's diversity.

Later, as you approach a production deadline, you discover that the shot does not include someone to represent your sizable Hispanic population. You have an archive of photos that you can use as a resource. You decide to cut and paste a Hispanic student into the group shot. The photo manipulation software makes the image appear seamless and realistic.



- Do you agree with adding the image of a Hispanic student to the cover shot?
- If the original cover shot had been staged, would it affect your decision?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

## To Publish or Not to Publish 8

Keep in mind a photojournalist's ethical duty to be fair, accurate and clear.

Editors, reporters and photographers make content decisions every day based on their news judgment, understanding of their communities, and awareness of their ethical, legal and economic responsibilities.

### Situation

You are editors and staff members of your school's newspaper, yearbook, literary art magazine and Web media. You are presented with different images to use in your particular medium.



- What stand do you take? How does each image's source help you to make your deadline?
- Is there an ethical reason to publish or not publish?
- What considerations guide your decision?
- What is your decision?

### Images, photographs or video that are available to use in your media are:

1. Photographs of students downloaded from the Internet.  
(For example, your yearbook needs mug shots of particular students; one of the feature spreads has no photographs; your newspaper photographer forgot to attend an event; your school's literary magazine needs pictures to accompany an "About the Authors and Artists" section you have decided to include.)
2. Copyrighted images that are found online.
3. Images of CD covers, promotional pictures/posters of movies or merchandise being reviewed.
4. "Artistic" semi-nude or nude photographs of a student.
5. Pictures or video from school-sponsored social events or from private parties, or photos taken in public places showing students drinking alcohol, picking their noses or in public displays of affection.
6. Photographs of students who have been suspended or arrested.

# NEWSEUM PHOTO ETHICS

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Visit the Pulitzer Prize Photographs Gallery (Level 1)

This gallery features the most comprehensive collection of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs ever assembled, as well as interviews with many of the photographers.

Some of the photographs have become icons of their time: Marines raising Old Glory on Iwo Jima, the joyful reunion of a returning prisoner of war and his family, a firefighter cradling an injured infant after the Oklahoma City bombing. Those and other images record the defining moments of our world and time.

Select one photograph from the gallery that strikes you. Choose an image you are drawn to or one you are repelled by — something to which you have an immediate reaction.

What does this image show? A person, a thing, a place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When was this image taken? Does it capture a particular time or event? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where was this image taken? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think the photographer was able to get this image? Do you think it was dangerous to take this picture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think this image was taken? Does it try to convey a message or idea? What emotions does this image elicit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think this photojournalist followed the ethical guidelines of being accurate, fair and clear? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_