Contributions to the school paper

*This document provides guidelines to any learner who would like to contribute to the school paper. It will be updated every month. Email* [*ChiefEd@gmail.com*](mailto:ChiefEd@gmail.com) *for the latest copy.   
The Editors*

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# Introduction

The school paper has editors and journalists who write articles regularly, but any learner can submit contributions to the school paper. If the contribution is good enough, it will get published. This pamphlet will give you an idea of the things we usually include in the school paper, as well as some guidelines to help get your contribution published.

# Presentation of articles

It is important that articles submitted for publication should be easily readable and as well presented as possible – this will help the editorial team to determine whether your article will be accepted, or whether it will need further ‘touching up’. Here are the basic steps you should follow when drawing up and submitting your article:

1. First plan the general layout
2. Type in and format all the text
3. Pictures
4. Insert pictures
5. Resize if needed
6. Supply captions
7. Fix any mistakes
8. Perform a spell check
9. Proofread for errors
10. E-mail your final article to the editor

There is a higher possibility that your article will be accepted if it is professionally presented, with interesting content and error-free. Don’t forget that each article must be accompanied with a hardcopy Article Submission Form.

# Articles

Articles may not be more than 300 words long, and should be written in English so that all our readers can read them. Think of them as very short essays – use what you have learned in your language subjects about brainstorming, drafting, editing, paragraph structure and grammar.

## Articles about sports matches

The editors of the newspaper publish game scores themselves. If you want to write an article about a sports match, it has to have much more than just the score. When you write about a sports match, you should try to give the reader a sense of what it was like to be a spectator at the match. Tell your readers things about the match that they might want to know.

You might want to mention

* the ‘back story’.

Has your school played against this other team before? How do they usually fare against the other team? Has our team or the other team suddenly improved a lot? Do the two teams have ‘a history’? Were any of our or their best players unable to play, and how did that affect the game? Do they or we have a new coach?

* what the vibe was like.

Did the players seem like they were just having fun, or were they deadly serious the whole time? Were there a lot of spectators? Was it really intense, with spectators focusing on the game and chanting war cries, or was it relaxed, with the different parents barbecuing together and playing music at the side of the field? The weather might also contribute to the atmosphere at a game. For example, a rugby match in the pouring rain, with the spectators huddling under umbrellas and the players all covered in mud, has a very different atmosphere from a match in the blazing sun.

* what the best moments were. Were any points or goals scored (or blocked) in interesting ways? For example, was the winning goal scored in the last few seconds? Or did the ball roll around the top of the basket for a while before finally dropping in? Or was there some excellent strategy involved?

Don’t

* write about it when our team loses miserably, because who wants to read about that?! That said, you can, of course, still write about a game if our team lost in a way that they can be proud of – for example, if they got a decent score or lost with one or two points against a very strong opponent.
* focus *exclusively* on one player. If one player played very well or scored a really good winning goal, you should definitely include that, but you should always acknowledge the efforts of the whole team as well.
* dis anyone, ever.

Don’t dis the other school (or team), their players, facilities or spectators. That’s just mean, and it can get our newspaper or even our school in serious trouble.

Don’t dis the ref. *EVER*. That can have comebacks next time, man!

Don’t dis any moms or dads who made fools of themselves. Sure, it’s hilarious when a parent rants at the ref or runs onto the field weeping with joy when their precious child scores a goal, but the kid does *not* want the whole school to be reminded of that. Be nice!

## Articles about individual achievements

Sometimes, our students do well in extramural activities that are either not presented by the school, or that very few learners in the school participate in (at all, or just at a particular level).

You might want to mention

* what the activity entails, especially if it’s unusual, or if some learners might not know much about it. Give about one short paragraph’s worth of detail. For example, all our readers might not know exactly what an Eisteddfod or Powerlifting or Bharatanatyam or Voortrekkers is. Try to get the essential ideas across in about one paragraph, e.g.

The modern Voortrekkers teach children more about Afrikaans culture, emphasise Christian values and community service, and take kids on camps where they learn survival skills. According to the UK Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, nature and the outdoors are languages that can be learned, and once learned, never forgotten. (Bailey, 2010)

* how the learner got involved in the activity, e.g. “Gina’s mom used to be a ballerina, and still practices her ballet as part of her fitness routine. When she was four, Gina showed an interest in these exercises. She joined the Lize Page dance academy at the age of six.”
* how other learners can get involved in the activity, e.g. “To participate in Mathletes, ask Mrs Goff for information.” – a mathlete is a person who competes in mathematics competitions at any level or any age. (Mathlete, 2014)

## Investigative articles

Investigate something that learners might be interested in, and write an article about it. Make sure that your topic would interest a *lot* of learners, and not just a small group.

You might want to mention

* The ‘back story’ – why did you think this matter was worth investigating? Why is your topic important or interesting? How does it relate to the school or affect learners?
* The investigation process – why do you know more about the matter than the average learner? How did you find your information?

Some examples of good ‘research’ article topics from the past:

**Is it safe?** *by Zanele Maleka, 2007.* For this article, Zanele used surveys to find out where our learners liked to hang out after school, and where they felt safe. She established the ten places where our learners spent the most time hanging out after school. She then went to the local Police station and asked to see their statistics on how much crime had taken place in each of those places in the previous few years. She established that, although lots of learners thought that the mall was safer than the park, this was not really the case.

**Basement Ghost caught!** *by Peter Wayne, 2010*. These guys followed up on the rumours that the basement under the school hall was haunted. They camped out there for the night and found out that it wasn’t a ghost that was rearranging the furniture in the basement every night. Some hostel kids had gotten hold of a key to the place, and were sneaking in at night to smoke pot. (They were later expelled.)

WARNING

If you find out about something bad going on in the school, like drug abuse or corruption, you have to report it to the relevant authorities first, before you send us your article. The principal has given us his promise that he will never sweep anything bad under the carpet or ruin your ‘scoop’ by announcing it before the article comes out. He might just want to take some kind of action before it is published: for example, if the article is about a local drug dealer, he might want to get the police to arrest that drug dealer first – after all, we wouldn’t want the drug dealer to read the article and make a run for it! The principal might also insist on seeing the article first, for example, to make sure that the learners involved are not named if that could lead to legal trouble, etc. After the authorities have handled the bad situation, we will let you publish the article if the article is good.

## Reviews

You can review a book, movie, game, theatre production, etc. Once again, make sure that it affects a lot of learners – do not review something that most of the learners have no access to. Give the book, movie, etc. a score out of ten, and proceed to explain why you feel it deserves that score. Reviews are a shorter type of article – do not exceed 100 words.

You might want to mention

* how it compares to other texts in its genre. For example, If it’s an action movie, you could compare it to other action movies that have recently come out, and say whether you found it more or less exciting than those movies. If it’s a fantasy novel for teenagers, you could mention whether you found it more or less interesting than other well-known fantasy novels, and explain why.
* how it compares to other work that the director/writer/creator has done.
* what type of person would like it, even if you do not. For example, if you didn’t think the latest James Bond movie was action-packed enough, mention that people who like dramas might like it instead.

Don’t

* insult the people that do like it – a review reflects your personal opinion, and you are entitled to it, but others are also entitled to theirs.
* use the review to complain about how much you hate the book that you are reading in your language subject.

## Articles about trends

It can be any trend: a trend in hairstyles amongst the learners, fashion, fitness, beauty, social media, etc.

You might want to mention

* whether you think the trend is good or bad in any way. For example, you might mention that posting lots of ‘selfies’ might make younger kids more vulnerable to paedophiles who stalk them online.
* how popular it is. For this you could do a poll, or something simpler, like counting the number of weaves with beads in the hall.
* how the trend started. For example, did a popular guy forget his belt one day, and now everyone thinks it’s cool for their underpants to show?
* how widespread the trend is. Is it happening all over the world, or just in your area or school?
* why people would choose to be part of the trend, or not. For this you could add a view learners’ opinions.

Don’t

* insult the people who are part of the trend.

## Articles about technology

This topic is popular with the learners, mostly because our paper stays on top of the latest and greatest developments in technology. We try to focus on new developments that at least some of our learners would be able to access and/or afford, or that might affect their lives in some way. These articles are often a lot like reviews (so have a look at the ‘reviews’ section for some hints and tips) but they are different from reviews, because we don’t bother writing about the less-than-awesome ones, and we also try to make them more informative than reviews, to help learners use the new technology. Here are some examples of topics in this category:

* New hardware
* New cellphone models
* Interesting websites – good, clean ones, though...
* Useful websites – including peer-reviewed ones that learners can use for assignments.

We would like to publish a short article on an app in every paper. The Appendix contains a list of the apps on Mr Gentle (the IT teacher’s) phone, but the list is too long to put in the paper just as it is. So we would like someone to volunteer to write a short article about one app every month.

# Other additions to the paper

## Photos

Photographs should be 100 dpi, and remember they will not be printed larger than 10 cm x 10 cm.

You don’t have to know a lot about photography or own an expensive camera to submit a photo to the school paper. The quality of your photo should just be good enough so that viewers can clearly see what it represents. Before you take a photograph for the school paper, play around with your camera or device for a while to get a feel for what you need to do to get good-looking photos. You might notice that your device takes a while to focus properly, etc.

What we are really interested in, is the content of your photograph: it should be something interesting that readers would want to see, like a wide shot of the venue during the matric dance, or some close-ups of the soccer team’s faces right after they scored the winning goal, or a picture of the painting that won the art competition.



Example 1: Cute Photo for technology article

If you are not certain whether the photograph is interesting or good enough, just go ahead and submit it anyway – the worst we can do is say ‘no thank you’. If we think the content is really interesting, we might also be able to tweak it in Photoshop so that it looks good enough to put in the paper.

Either work with a journalist and try to take photographs to match their articles, or add a caption to your photo, explaining what it’s all about.

## Comics and cartoons

If you are good at drawing cartoons, you can either submit a cartoon to match a friend’s article (be sure to submit them together, so that we know they match) or a self-explanatory cartoon, perhaps with a caption.

If anyone would like to publish a comic strip as a regular feature in the paper, then send us a few examples of your work. Obviously the ‘story’ of this comic strip would have to be about something school-related, and you can’t ‘steal’ an existing set of characters (e.g. no *Spiderman* fan comics).

Funny cartoons and comics are usually popular, but you are also welcome to submit a more serious cartoon or comic that focuses more on social commentary (like *Bittercomix*).

If your cartoon or comic strip represents anyone in the school – a teacher or learner – we will only consider publishing it if you bring us a note from that person saying it’s ok for us to publish it – once again, we don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings or insult anyone.

## Competitions and puzzles

With puzzles, we publish the answers in the next edition, and learners get to see if they got it right.

E.g. word games like crosswords and monkey-puzzles, number games like Sudoku, riddles, etc. For interest, a New Zealander by the name of Wayne Gould discovered a few Japanese Sudoku puzzles in 1979, and spent the next six years writing a computer program to produce them.

With competitions, learners submit their answers, and the winner is announced in the next edition. Keep in mind that we don’t have funds for prizes, but we usually publish a small photo of the winner. Make sure that the competition is fun, that it’s easy to judge, and that many learners would be able to participate.

E.g. **Tiny Teachers** *by Khanyisile Mhangwane,* 2012. For this competition, Khanyisile asked all the teachers who were willing to bring her baby pictures of themselves, and then we had a competition where learners had to guess which baby picture represented which teacher.

Finally, if you have an idea for something completely new in the school paper, speak to Mrs Smith about it.

# School events

Below is a list of the events that have been planned for this year. Please diarise these dates, and make every effort to become involved. Remember, we need articles for the school magazine at the end of the year. The teachers listed here will be responsible for each event. Oh yes – don’t forget your cameras!

**Date Event Teacher**

5 Sept Mother and daughter high tea (fundraiser) Mrs R Barnard

6 Sept Sidewalk drawing competition Ms L Antelme

8 Sept Gr 10 field trip to Groenkloof nature reserve Ms S Daya

12 Sept Home economics class brownie competition Ms M Bronkhorst

12-14 Sept Gr 11 prefects camp Mr L Memani

17 Sept Water Fight Wednesday Mr F Swanepoel

19 Sept Birds of prey presentation Ms Eleen Strydom

26 Sept Gr 9 Career Day Mrs S Viegas

# Bibliography

# Appendix

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| **App** | **Function** | **Comment** |
| ***Opera mini*** | Browsing internet | Opera mini allows for fast internet browsing and it synchronizes with the opera browser on my desktop. |
| ***Adobe Reader LE*** | View pdf files | Essential for pdf email attachments or downloaded pdf files |
| ***Skype*** | VoIP | Useful little application allowing me to make voice calls or send IM |
| ***WhatsApp*** | Messaging app, exchange messages without having to pay for SMS | Cheap communication is always welcomed by the general public. Advantages of WhatsApp is the compatibility with other phones. |
| ***Office Mobile*** | Word Mobile, Excel Mobile, PowerPoint Mobile, OneNote Mobile, and Outlook Mobile | Much needed and used to quickly view email attachments, edit small documents, rehearse PowerPoints to be presented. |
| ***Sprite Backup*** | Complete phone backup | Only fools don’t backup – a good backup utility and backup regime is vital. I backup at least once a month. |
| ***Google Maps*** | Navigation | The satellite view is useful when you want to make sure where you are – drawback is “data” cost. |
| ***MSS Converter*** | Converts units – lengths, currencies, area, masses | Offline converter saves bandwidth and cost. |
| ***CorePlayer*** | Plays nearly all formats | Best video player I’ve found to date. Codec’s are easy to update. |
| ***News24*** | Get breaking news, sport and lifestyle news from South Africa and around the world | As you get older you like to be informed. |
| ***Facebook app*** |  | Nice clean interface to access Facebook. |
| ***RSS Hub*** | RSS Aggregator | Easy to use RSS reader, I have 8 channels I follow and regularly update. |
| ***Flashlight app*** | Camera flash can be used as flashlight | I always have my phone therefore it is exceptionally useful to have a “built” in flash light. |
| ***Gtalk*** | Instant messaging | Additional instant messaging tool. Beats the cost of SMS. |
| ***YouTube player*** | Plays YouTube videos | Useful for the odd YouTube funny video link in emails. Multimedia entertainment while waiting for a lift / taxi. |
| ***MyMobiler*** | View your mobile screen on your desktop and control your mobile from your computer. | Must have utility, allows you to remotely manage your phone from your desktop while it is tethered via USB or Bluetooth. You can drag and drop to the screen, the screen prints, copy and paste test to SMS, email, etc. |
| ***Angry birds*** | Game | Quick low attention span game excellent for getting time to fly in bank queues. |