

Basic Terms



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No, I did NOT just call you a dingbat or a dummy.

Active voice: The subject of the sentence performs the action in the verb. Ex: *I threw the ball, as opposed to The ball was thrown by me.*

All caps: Words printed in all upper case letters.

Anecdotal lead: A type of feature lead, in which a short story told at the beginning focuses in on one person's or group's experience which represents the universal experience.

Art work: An illustration or photograph which may be used in combination with typography.

Ascender: The upper stroke of a letter which extends above the x-height. b, d, f, h, k, l

Block type: A classification of type in which strokes and serifs are of equal density.

Body type: Type in which stories are set.

Boldface: Type set thicker and heavier for emphasis.

Broadsheet: Full-size newspaper, measuring approximately 13 1/2 inches by 21 inches.

Bullet: Typographical device, or dingbat, used to emphasize lists

Butting heads: Two or more headlines which are set right next to each other. Also called *tombstoning*.

Byline: Line at the beginning of a story which gives the name of the person or persons who wrote the story.

Camera-ready: Completed pasteup.

Caricature: A drawing or cartoon which distorts a person's features for effect.

Censorship: Deletion of material on the grounds that it might be harmful to publish it.

Character count: The number of characters, including spaces between words, that make up a piece of copy.

Clean copy: Material that is neat, properly set up and free of typographical errors.

Clip art: Artwork obtained from books or the internet used in the design of printed materials.

Color printing: The reproduction of a full-color photograph or illustration with the four process colors of cyan, yellow, magenta and black. Also, the use of ink any color other than black.

Color separation: The filtering of each of the four process colors from the original and the recording of each color on separate pieces of film.

Column: A bylined commentary run on the editorial/opinion page. Also, in typography, one leg of type.

Column inch: The amount of space one column wide by one inch deep.

Column sig: A logo that identifies a continuously run column

Composition: (1) The setting of type and laying out of a page. (2) The arrangement of elements in a photograph.

Condensed type: A narrow type face.

Copy: Any material prepared for publication.

Copy block: The text of a story or ad which has been typeset.

Copy editor: Person designated to read all stories, editing and revising it to correct errors in fact, spelling, grammar and style.

Copy fitting: Determining the amount of material that can be placed in a given space, based on a specified size of type.

Copyright: The exclusive right of the owner of an original intellectual property, such as a story,

poem, photograph, work of art, etc. to make, distribute and control copies of that work for a specified number of years, as guaranteed by law.

Cutline: Copy that describes the action in a photograph. Also called a caption.

Defamation: Hurting the reputation of a person.

Descender: The lower stroke of a letter which extends below the baseline: g, j, p, y.

Desktop publishing: The use of a computer and software applications to create, edit and store elements of a publication.

Digital camera: Camera that produces photographs electronically, without film, for direct input into a computer.

Dingbat: A small abstract or naturalistic ornament, such as a bullet.

Display type: Larger than text type, used to call attention. Headline.

Dominant element: The largest element on a page, the focal point, or center of visual interest.

Downstyle: Headline capitalization that occurs as in a sentence. The first word and proper nouns and adjectives are capitalized.

DPI: Dots per inch. Describes the resolution on an input or output device, such as a printer or a scanner.

Dummy: Mock-up of a page or ad to show the size, shape, form, sequence and general style for content.

Editorial: A persuasive piece of writing that represents the opinion of the newspaper as a whole.

Editorial copy: All artwork, stories, captions and headlines prepared for publication, except for advertising.

Editorializing: Allowing explicit or implicit bias to color the facts; unattributed opinion.

External margin: White space on the outside edges of a page. The area outside the columns.

Feature story: A factual piece designed to entertain or inform the reader and hold interest all the way to the end of the story.

First Amendment: This Amendment forbids Congress from making any law that would restrict the freedom of the press, or of religion, or of speech or the right to assemble peacefully.

Flush left: Copy that is set so the left margin is even.

Folio: The page number, date and name of the publication, run at the top of a newspaper page, or the bottom of a yearbook page.

Follow-up story: Article about events which have already taken place.

Forum: A medium through which people express a variety of opinions.

Future angle: Emphasis in a story on what will happen, rather than on what has already happened.

Graphics: Artwork and text on printed surfaces

Gutter: The inner space between two facing pages.

Hairline rule: Extremely thin line

Halftone print: The reproduction of a black and white continuous tone original.

Hammer: A large bold headline consisting of one or two words, run above a secondary headline of one or more lines which tell the gist of the story.

Hard news: Urgent, timely material that affects readers in a real way.

Headline: "Title" of a story which summarizes the most newsworthy facts or ideas in a story.

Infographics: Charts, diagrams, graphs or maps that include illustrations or photography.

Initial letter: Large letter set at the beginning of a block of type for emphasis. Also called a drop cap.

Internal margin: Consistent spacing between elements on a page, usually one pica.

Invasion of privacy: Unauthorized use of a person's name or picture in an ad; placing a person in a false light; intrusion; publication of private and embarrassing facts.

Italic: Slanted type, used for emphasis, or to indicate the name of a book or a play.

Jump head: Headline that runs of a continued section of a story that began on a different page.

Jump line: Line used to show reader where to find the rest of the story.

Kicker: In headlines, a smaller sized headline run above the main headline

Layout: The arrangement of body type, headlines, artwork and white space on a page.

Lead: The opening paragraph(s) of a story.

Lead-in: Variation in typography at the beginning of a caption.

Leading: The amount of space between lines of type

Libel: Written or printed defamation of character which is not provably true.

Logo: Trademark or special type or design

Lower case: Type that is not capitalized.

Masthead: Copy that runs on the editorial page and contains information about the publication's operations including the names of the editors.

Modular: A layout style in which all elements form a rectangle.

Nameplate: The publication's identifying emblem on page one. Also called a flag.

News elements: The qualities in any event or situation which make it newsworthy.

News hole: Space left in the newspaper for editorial copy after the ads have been dummied.

News peg: Timely information that gives a feature a current angle.

News story: Factual, unbiased account of a current event.

Novelty type: Decorative type faces used to set a mood.

Obscenity: Hard core pornography. Not protected by First Amendment. Obscenity is determined by community standards.

Off the record: Information given to a reporter on the condition that it not be used in a story.

Op/Ed page: Opinion page, including editorials.

Package: Group of related articles that may be accompanied by artwork.

Page elements: Artwork, body type, headline type and white space that make up page design

Passive voice: The subject is acted upon by someone or something else. *The ball was thrown by me, as opposed to: I threw the ball.*

Paste-up: the process of manually sticking material onto an art board.

Pica: A unit of measurement equal to 1/6 of an inch.

Plagiarism: Passing off someone else's work as your own.

Point: A unit of measurement equal to 1/72 of an inch.

Pull quote: Display type that emphasizes a source's words.

Ragged right: Copy set flush left.

Reverse: Opposite of normal

Review: Opinion piece which analyzes and evaluates a creative work.

Rule line: A line used to accent copy.

Sans serif: A type classification distinguished by letters that have no short, finishing strokes at the end of the main strokes.

Screening: To print a color, including black, in a lighter shade than maximum.

Serif: A small finishing stroke at the end of a main stroke of a letter.

Shirt-tail: The name of the writer(s) of a story run at the end of the story.

Sidebar: Story that accompanies a main article and provides a particular angle

Slander: Spoken or broadcast defamation which is not provably true.

Soft news: Information that has relatively little immediate or long-range bearing on readers' lives.

Spot color: The use of a color other than black in printing.

Spot news: News that occurs without warning

Spread: Two facing pages in a publication.

Standing head: A graphic label in display type that introduces a section of the paper.

Stylebook/Style sheet: Set of written guidelines that ensure consistency in the use of abbreviations, punctuation, spelling, numerals, etc., throughout a publication.

Subhead: Headline that contains information of less importance than the main headline.

Tabloid: A paper with a 10 1/4 x 16 inch image space. About half the size of a broadsheet.

Teaser: Headline or artwork that may appear on page one to call attention to particular articles inside

the paper.

Third person: Using “he”, “she” “it” or “they” in place of “I”, “we”, or “you.”

Trapped white space: An area of white space in excess of the standard internal margin on a page.

Tripod: A headline with a hammer on the left of two equal lines in a smaller size.

Typography: The study of type and how it is used.

Upper case: The capital letters of a type face.

Upstyle: Headline capitalization of the first letter of every word.

White space: One of the four main design elements. Any part of the page that does not contain illustrations or type.

x-height: The height of the lower case letter x