**Journalism Ethics**

Don't let the fact that this is a quiz fool you -- ethics are not about being correct or incorrect -- they are about understanding beliefs and values. What we've assembled here are ethical dilemmas that high school journalists might face, with explanations about the generally accepted answers shared by some leaders in scholastic media education. But all of the scenarios here have gray areas, where your answer might change if you had more information, or if the situation were just slightly different.

That is the most important aspect of journalism ethics. It's not enough to know right or wrong; it's more pertinent that you buy into the rationale journalists use when making tough decisions. So think long and hard before making a choice on each of these questions.

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| **1.**  | You are preparing to do a restaurant review of a new establishment in town. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Call the restaurant management and let them know that you are going to be dining there. You could shore up your review with an interview, and journalists must always reveal their identity to sources.  |

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| **B.**  | Dine at the restaurant without alerting management. You would not want to get special treatment before your review runs in the newspaper.  |

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| **2.**  | You are a new member of your high school newspaper and have been instructed to clean up your Facebook profile to avoid the appearance of biases. One of the topics on your profile lists you as a catholic. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Take the listing down. The newspaper often reports on religious issues and your affiliation could jeopardize its neutrality.  |

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| **B.**  | Keep the listing up. Sharing your religious beliefs is important to you and doesn’t interfere with your duties at the newspaper.  |

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| **3.**  | You just finished an interview with a new source and then received an email saying that the source has tried to add you as a friend on Facebook. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Accept. Your publication has no right telling you whom you can be friends with.  |

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| **B.**  | Decline. You explain to the source that such a friendship could create the perception of bias.  |

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| **4.**  | You are taking pictures of a rally near your high school with a large police presence. The protest turns violent, however, and protesters begin throwing rocks at police officers. One of the officers approaches you asking for your camera so that authorities can begin investigating who started the riot. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Refuse. The newspaper is not an arm of the government, and it is not your job to help law enforcement.  |

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| **B.**  | Agree. It is your duty as a citizen to help police investigate criminal activity. Your camera might have important information that could bring a dangerous person to justice.  |

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| **5.**  | A source tells you that she has pertinent information about an ongoing scandal at your school, but she wants to go “off the record” before she tells you details. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Agree to go “off the record.” The source says she has pertinent information and you doubt that you can retrieve the information elsewhere. You will be sure to print the information anonymously.  |

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| **B.**  | Decline the information. “Off the record” talk usually brings with it all sorts of legal problems.  |

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| **6.**  | After an interview with a representative from student council, your source starts panicking because he realizes that all student council communications are supposed to go through the organization's public relations liaison. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Find a polite way to say “tough luck.” The source knew you were a reporter and that you were working on a story.  |

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| **B.**  | Compromise with the source by saying you will e-mail the quotes to the public relations liaison to look over prior to publication.  |

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| **7.**  | An advertiser has approached your advertising staff about running an ad on the front page of the newspaper, and as the final authority on all content in the paper, the decision falls to you as editor-in-chief. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Allow it. You can charge extra for the premium placement and use those funds to help support other endeavors for the newspaper staff.  |

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| **B.**  | Deny it. The front page of the newspaper should be reserved for editorial content alone.  |

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| **8.**  | You need a photograph of a senior you are profiling in the newspaper, and you notice that he has his professionally shot senior photographs posted on his Facebook page. You:  |

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| **A.**  | Ask the student for permission and, if granted, use the photo in your publication.  |

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| **B.**  | Avoid using the photograph.  |

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| **9.**  | While trying to transcribe the audio from an interview with a source, you accidentally erase your recording. You call your source to schedule another interview, but she says that she won't have time before your deadline and that you should, "Just use quotes from your memory." You indeed have a good memory of the interview, so you:  |

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| **A.**  | Leave the source out of your story.  |

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| **B.**  | Agree to make up the quotes based on your memory, but insist that the source look them over before publishing them.  |