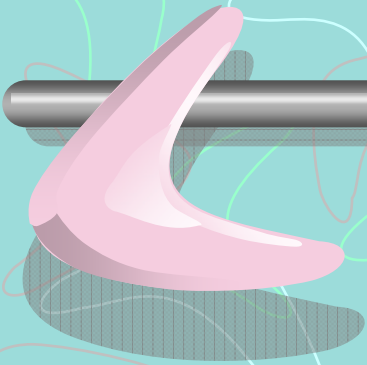


Cutlines



A picture is worth a thousand words – but someone still has to write those words

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Cutlines

- The photograph attracts the reader's attention, but a good cutline finishes the story and add details that are not in the photo.
- Is it cutline or caption?
 - Either. Historically cutlines were the descriptions found in newspapers for illustrations which were cut from wood blocks.
 - The term caption is usually used in yearbook and magazine production.



Reasons for using Cutlines

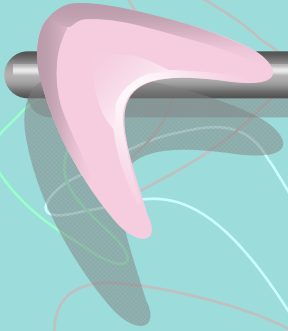
- They grab reader's attention
- They provide information for the busy reader who may not read the entire story or who don't want to read the entire story. Using proper cutlines will get some of the story information to the reader.



Cutline Example

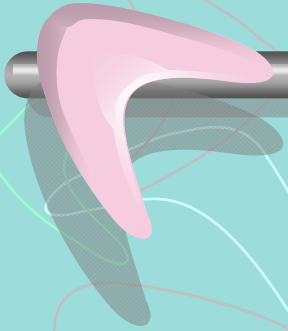
Bad Cat. Looking for more trouble to cause, Woodie spies his next opportunity in a stack of newspapers. His owner said, "This cat does not realize just how stupid he is sometimes."





Get the information

- Cutlines should tell what went on before and after the photo was taken.
- Who is in the picture? Readers will not remember names in a few years. Give them the names now.
- What event or action is taking place?
- When did it happen?
- Why were these people doing what they were doing?



How to write a good cutline

- Be specific. Give details – scores, information, outcomes.
- Tell something that is not obvious in the picture.
- Continue the story the picture started. Cutlines are small news stories.
- Fully identify everyone.
- Use lead-ins to grab attention.



Cutline Grammar

- The first sentence is in present tense. This is the sentence describing what is taking place in the photo.
 - Why write the first sentence in present tense? Events in photos go on forever. It is a moment in time that is stopped for eternity.
- All other sentences are written in past tense.



ABC method to Cutline Writing

- A – Action packed. Give action packed information that describes the photo. Pay attention to what is NOT obvious.
- B – Basic information. Provide the basic information to the photo using the 5Ws and H.
- C – Creative information. This is background information that includes interesting details which is not apparent in the photo.



Ways to write the Cutline

- Begin with an adjective
- Use the casual lead that emphasizes the reason or cause of the action. This will usually begin with "because" or "since."
- A gerund lead (verb ending in -ing used as a noun)
- Proper Noun – This should only be used when the person in the photo is extremely important or well-known.



Ways to begin the cutline

- Begin with the time element. Usually starts with "while," "where," "as" or "since."
- Use a quotation



Do we name everyone in the photo?

- YES
- All people who are recognizable in the photo should be named. This includes using full names and titles.



Cutline Do's

- Use the first three to five words to grab attention
- State the obvious without being obvious
- Include the 5ws and H just as in a news story
- Use adjectives and adverbs
- Consider what took place before, during and after the action
- Use visual and specific nouns



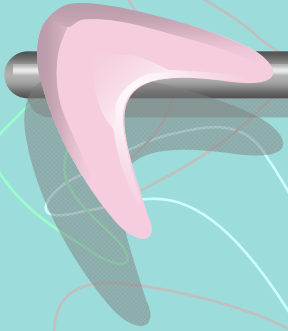
Cutline Do's

- Use action verbs
- Keep the cutlines factual and true
- Identify all people in some sort of order. Include titles.
- Interview the people in the photo to get background information
- Proofread – especially names



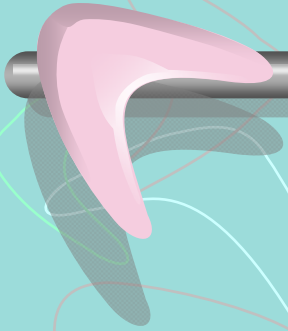
Cutline Do's

- Write in good taste
- Should be less than 50 words. Any more than that is a news story
- Keep sentences short. Instead of one long sentence, use two or three shorter ones.



Cutline Don'ts

- Begin with a name – unless that is the most important element of the photo
- Begin with labels
- State the obvious
- Use lead-ins such as “pictured above” or “shown here”
- Use “seems to” or “tries to”



Cutline Don'ts

- Pad with needless information. Stick to the story of the photo
- NEVER use gag, joke or double meaning comments
- Comment, question or talk to the picture