

BUILDING PORTFOLIOS

1 GETTING STARTED EARLY is the first step to building a good portfolio. Read the directions carefully, and make sure you have plenty of time to gather all the essential pieces and create your design. The cover and inside pages should all match -- use the letterhead for each page throughout.

2 YOUR SELF REFLECTION piece will be the first page of your portfolio. This should include your journalism experiences, your involvement with your publications program and your leadership skills. Show the judges your special passion for journalism, and why journalism is important.

3 LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION from teachers, employers and business professionals should be next (include 3-5). Although a letter of recommendation from your principal is not usually required, I suggest it. Make sure you give people plenty of time; don't expect it right away.

4 SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEER activities should be the last page before showing judges what kind of work you can do. Write the name of the activity and the length of time you participated. If you arrange all the activities in a graph, they will be much easier to read.

5 SELECT DESIGNS, STORIES and photos that stand out above the rest of your work. You don't want to show judges every article you have ever published, but you should give them samples of your best work. Your portfolio should consist of about 35 pages total.

6 ADDING FINAL TOUCHES will simply make your portfolio stand out from the others. Write a description, including the date and name of publication, for each design, photo or story in your portfolio. I suggest using a black portfolio with black paper behind each piece of work.