

## Why I am Choosing a Career in Journalism

What started as a happy accident turned out to be the career I want to pursue. As an incoming freshman, journalism wasn't on my list of desired classes. But after being misplaced in a woodshop course, I only had two classes I could switch into—Intro to Journalism and Intro to Acting. The idea of being emotive in front of my peers was unimaginable, so I signed up for Intro to Journalism. Within two months, I was writing 2-3 articles per issue.

As my participation on the newspaper continued, I grew fonder of finding interesting stories, conducting interviews and the feeling of writing with a deadline fast approaching. I felt proud when someone told me they had read one of my stories. I was hooked. I couldn't wait to write the next story. I would sit in the newspaper room on deadline nights with nothing to do, waiting for some way to help. I greedily scooped up the pieces of an unfinished story and completed it on more than one occasion.

As a sophomore, I became Sports Editor and had my first experiences with layout, production, graphic design and leadership. Learning how to organize and encourage my peers was a valuable skill to learn when I became Co-Editor-in-Chief junior year.

During junior year, my writing, photography, graphic design, production and layout skills all improved tremendously. My first in-depth news story came in November of 2008 when the program the Meridian School District uses to store grades and check attendance crashed. With only three days to gather information, conduct interviews and write the story, this was my first experience with a tight deadline, and I loved it. The feeling only got better when students and teachers alike read the story and told me how much they appreciated it.

I became Editor-in-Chief this year, and my leadership skills have been constantly tested. It seems every day there is a challenge or a problem to be solved. Newspaper class is a highly dynamic environment where differences in personality and maturity are overcome in the desire to achieve a common goal. Pulling everyone together has been my most difficult and time-consuming task this year. In spite of the challenges, I have been able to write several high quality articles, including two investigative news stories. Writing is what I love to do most for the newspaper, but the leadership skills I have learned are valuable as well.

I hope to go on to study journalism in college, ideally at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. Print media is my main focus, but I will also look into new media forms and where hard news is going to come from in the future. Regardless of where technology takes media in the coming years, the lessons I have learned in both production and management from my time with *The Patriot Ledger* are sure to help me with a career in journalism.