



Join a professional journalism organization

The impact of journalism might best be told through journalism organizations. But do they do enough to reach out to the public? If they don't, the best way to change them may be to join and reinvent them from within. Most professional journalism organizations offer reduced-price memberships to students. Some organizations even encourage student chapters to be formed.

Discovery assignments for students to prepare for class discussion:

Flashlight: [The Journalism Education Association's](#) Scholastic Press Rights Commission has a student group called [45 Words](#). Explore this program to see how it benefits high school students working in student media. Are there other such programs at the high school level?

Spotlight: Most professional journalism organizations welcome college student members. The fastest growing is the [Online News Association](#). Check out its website, as well as those of the [Society of Professional Journalists](#) and [Radio Television Digital News Association](#). Review this [list from the American Journalism Review of other journalism organizations](#). Do some groups seem more welcoming of students than others? Which of them highlight the major scholarships offered by [AP-Google](#)?

Searchlight: Look in-depth at the [Investigative Reporters and Editors](#). How did the group get its name? What's its mission? When was it formed? What is the fee for joining IRE as a student member? Can you find anything on the website that indicates a desire by IRE to reach out to the general public to explain the role of journalism?

Extra credit: If journalists have a "common language," it is found in the [Associated Press Stylebook](#). AP offers virtual communities around its stylebook, including a digital tool to [check your stories against AP style](#). Ask your students to get the stylebook and be prepared to talk about the general practices it outlines that describe good journalism.