

Creative Theme

concept exercise

Divide the class into groups of three or four students each. On the following page, based on the sample below, create a fictitious school and answer the questions about the fictitious school. Write three theme ideas for this school and select the best theme for that year. Discuss theme spin-off titles for each section in the book and design strategies to reflect your concept.

Example:

School's name: Theodore Roosevelt High School

City, State: Wild Horse, TX

Describe location: On the prairie on the outskirts of town

Mascot: Mustang

School colors: Teal and purple

Traditions:

- Everyone comes back for homecoming
- Spring fling - class competitions with some faculty participating
- Rodeo brings participants from across the U.S. and Canada to participate
- Christmas Angel Tree Project raises funds for less fortunate children in the community

School's pride factors:

- Excellent athletic program; won state in football, girls' basketball and volleyball; state runners-up in boys' basketball, baseball and tennis
- Six National Merit Scholars
- Vocational club and DECA won state contests; FFA took top awards in steers, horses and goats

- We work with our local law enforcement officers to provide students opportunities to host weekend events in which the entire school participates
- Nationally recognized for anti-peer pressure program, helping students to make good decisions, to take pride in their work and to avoid drugs and alcohol

How this school differs from other schools:

- Ninety-five percent graduation rate
- Parent involvement at all levels, from elementary to high school
- Our building is 75 years old and is on the National Historic Registry. It has been well cared-for.

Changes/challenges for this year:

- State has cut our funding by 40%, possibly forcing us to cut programs
- Principal and his leadership council are making plans for fund-raisers to offset the cuts
- Community members are assisting as volunteer teachers, aides, custodians and bus drivers to help

Honors/awards:

- State sportsmanship award
- State spirit award
- Highest test scores in the state
- Highest percentage of students going to and completing higher education
- State Teacher of the Year
- Proud to be You-nique honors from the National Education Association

Sample Answers:

Three possible theme ideas:

1. A Horse of a Different Color (based on school colors and the unique pride-building programs in the school)
2. Just Cut It Out (based on budget cuts and how we are dealing with them)
3. You-niquely yours (based on the wide variety of personalities within the school and our unique school colors)

Our choice:

A Horse of a Different Color

Spinoff section titles:

Student Life: Our Colorful World
Sports: Pride in Our Colors
Academics: Colorful Facts
Organizations: Colorful Interests
People: Colorful Personalities

Design/copy strategies:

- Colorful paint splatters behind headlines, caption headlines and secondary modules
- Color-coded sections
- Colorful phrases and descriptions in stories
- Colorful action photos featuring our school colors