

Personal Statement

In a recent conversation I had with my best friend, I was told that journalism sounds thankless, terrifying, and depressing; to be honest, I agree. When I was younger, I used to be extremely shy, afraid to open up and speak to anyone aside from my family and a couple of close friends. Yet, over the years — especially the last two, due to being an avid reporter, opinion editor, and current editor-in-chief for El Estoque — I've found my voice through writing, and now, I want to travel the world and pursue a career in investigative journalism, using my words to tell stories. I want to use my words to speak up for the people and groups that can't, and to educate people that are unaware; I'm a firm believer in the fact that information is a catalyst and the first step towards inciting action and real change. So yes, journalism sounds thankless, terrifying, and depressing, but to me, it also sounds fascinating, powerful, and would be a dream come true.

Finding Balance: Navigating COVID-19 Media Consumption

(<https://elestoque.org/2020/04/30/opinion/finding-balance-navigating-covid-19-media-consumption/>)

This was the first article that I wrote from home, after the shelter-in-place caused due to COVID-19 was imposed by my school district. Initially, I felt helpless, feeling like I wasn't doing enough to support people that were being impacted by this global public health crisis, but I turned to my words to make a difference. I realized that, like me, many students and members of my community must be feeling overwhelmed by the media coverage of COVID. As a journalist, I felt like it was important, and my responsibility to inform people about how to effectively navigate the news during this time, and find a balance between staying informed and obsessively reading the news to the point where it is overwhelming and emotionally tolling, and my editorial did so effectively, citing specific examples and action steps people can take to curb this problem, as well as being concise and an easy read.

Embracing my introversion (<https://elestoque.org/2020/04/10/uncategorized/embracing-my-introversion/>)

This self-reflective column talks about my journey through high school, and life in general, while being an introvert. Not only is this column personal, it's also relatable, and the message embedded within it is meant to reach introverts everywhere. It's a reminder that although society has a tendency to favor extroverts, introverts are valuable and their voices deserve to be heard as well. Since high school tends to sometimes foster an environment where people are plagued with imposter syndrome, as well as an arena where it's easy to feel inadequate, this column is a reminder for not just introverts, but everyone, to value themselves and their voices, using my personal experiences to effectively narrate this message.

The US versus Italy: Third-Party Politics (<https://elestoque.org/2019/12/13/uncategorized/the-u-s-versus-italy-third-parties/>)

This story is part of a package that compares political institutions in the United States to other countries, and the story I wrote focuses on the heavy third-party political participation that takes place in Italy, a major contrast from American politics. My school, MVHS, is dominantly liberal and most have political viewpoints that align closely with everyone else's; yet, this story was an opportunity for me to interview students and teachers who could provide a more nuanced take on their political leanings, including their thoughts on the lack of third party politics in America. The story was lengthy, yet managed to still draw in the reader due to insightful quotes and interesting ideas that I was able to discover through my reporting.

Immigration in the United States: A Broken System

(<https://elestoque.org/2019/10/26/opinion/immigration-in-the-united-states-a-broken-system/>)

This may be the most powerful story I've ever written, and my personal favorite. My co-author and I are VISA holders, and we wanted to bring attention to the issues faced by legal immigrants in the United States. It was not only directly connected to the MVHS campus — many students are VISA holders — but it also served as a catalyst for change on a national level, when a lawyer (Brent Renison) saw us promote it on Twitter and actually took action, filing a lawsuit that was inspired by our story. The story was evidence and fact-heavy in the beginning and end, but in the middle, there were two short, anecdotal-style columns detailing the personal experiences that my co-author and I have had. By including these, our message was amplified; the story was no longer a bunch of facts and information about immigration reform bills, instead, by putting faces to the story, the story came alive and was eventually able to fuel real change. This story reminded me that I may only be a teenager, but I can make a difference.

Meaningful Protesting (<https://elestoque.org/2019/09/25/opinion/meaningful-protesting/>)

This is another self-reflective piece that I did, one that talks about refuting my initial belief that protesting is ineffective. It has a strong connection with the MVHS campus and the student body, as I talk about the gun violence protest we held a couple years ago, as well as a Bay Area climate change protest held close to the time this was published. Especially right now, with the Black Lives Matter movement spreading across the country and the protests influencing change on a national level, the message embedded within this column is important — the concision with which I express myself makes it all the more powerful.

