



TRAILMARK YEARBOOKS

*Blazing Trails. Leaving Your Mark.*

# THE TRAILMARK PLAYBOOK

Monthly plays to win the yearbook game.

A year-round guide for yearbook advisers and staffs

#### AFFORDABILITY

25-50% savings.  
No price increases.

#### ON-DEMAND PRINTING

No minimums.  
Every student gets a book.

#### TURNAROUND

Books in 2-3 weeks after final submission. Award-winning adviser support all year.

#### SERVICE

#### SUMMER

Jun–Aug

#### MONTH 1

Aug/Sept

#### MONTH 2

Sept/Oct

#### MONTH 3

Oct/Nov

#### MONTH 4

Nov/Dec

#### MONTH 5

Dec/Jan

#### MONTH 6

Jan/Feb

#### MONTH 7

Feb/Mar

#### MONTH 8

Mar/Apr

#### MONTH 9

Apr/May

#### MONTH 10

May/Jun

[trailmarkyearbooks.com](http://trailmarkyearbooks.com)

## PRE-SEASON

# SUMMER

## Jun / Jul / Aug

Every championship program has a pre-season. Build your foundation now so your staff takes the field in September ready to play.

### THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Connect with your TrailMark rep.** Confirm budget, page count, specs, and your delivery window. No deposits. No invoices until you've collected.
- Meet your people.** Know your staff, your editors, and the administrator who oversees yearbook before the first day of school.
- Launch early book sales.** Summer is prime selling time. Use email, social media, and back-to-school communications to push early orders.
- Contact your school photographer.** Confirm picture day, retake day, and digital file delivery. Schedule team and club photos now — not in October.
- Set up your Canva workspace.** Create your TrailMark team, load brand colors and fonts, and organize shared template folders built to print specs.
- Create a Staff Manual.** Define roles, expectations, and deadlines before day one. A staff that understands its responsibilities runs itself.
- Launch your social media accounts.** Set them up and post summer content — photo submissions, staff reveals, school announcements.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- New adviser?** You don't have to know every play yet. Your TrailMark rep is your assistant coach — reach out early and stay connected.
- Start brainstorming your theme.** Collect inspiration: words, images, colors, feelings. Let ideas develop before the pressure hits.
- Plan your first week of school.** Team-building on day one signals to your staff: this is a place worth showing up for.
- Review last year's ladder.** Your blueprint. Knowing what worked — and what didn't — puts you miles ahead before the season starts.

### COACH'S CORNER

Pre-season work wins championships. Every hour you invest before school starts is worth three hours of scrambling in October. Prepared teams don't just compete — they set the standard.

### TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark's no-deposit, no-invoice model means your program is never at financial risk. Collect from families first — then we print. No unsold books. No leftover invoices.

## OPENING DRIVE

# MONTH 1

## Aug / Sept

The season is officially underway. Month one is about training, culture, and coverage planning. Get your roster ready to tell stories — then send them to the field.

### WRAPPING UP

- Finalize your page ladder.** Assign sections, topics, deadlines, and staff members to every page.
- Check the school calendar.** Map every major event and deadline. Flag anything that might interfere with production.
- Confirm your theme.** A strong theme gives your staff a creative playbook for every decision all year.
- Get your student roster.** Gaps in your roster become gaps in your book.

### THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Teach photo composition.** Rule of thirds, light, angles, storytelling. Run a photo scavenger hunt to build the habit.
- Build your culture calendar.** Block time for team-building all year now, before the calendar fills. Culture is a play you run on purpose.
- Launch your social media presence.** Back-to-school content, staff introductions, photo submission requests.
- Teach interviewing fundamentals.** Story-finding, source selection, accurate note-taking. Have students practice on each other.
- Define your leadership structure.** Editors, section leads, social media manager, coverage coordinator. Defined roles create ownership.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- Inventory camera equipment.** Know what you have. Build a checkout system so equipment is tracked all year.
- Train students in Canva.** Load TrailMark print-spec templates and walk through the basic design workflow now — before deadline pressure hits.
- Sell yearbooks at early events.** Back-to-school nights, open houses, fall athletic events. Be there with a QR code.

### COACH'S CORNER

The first few weeks set the culture for the entire season. A coach who invests in team chemistry in August doesn't manage morale crises in February. Build the culture first — everything follows.

### TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark's on-demand printing means no pressure to pre-sell a fixed number of books. Parents can order anytime after initial shipment at no extra cost. Every student gets a book.

## SETTING THE FORMATION

## MONTH 2

## Sept / Oct

Coverageplanning, design foundations, and photo workflows are the unglamorous work that makes the book great. Serious programs do this work in October.

## WRAPPING UP

- Share your finalized ladder.** Every player knows their pages, topics, and deadlines. A visible shared ladder makes accountability automatic.
- Plan coverage deliberately.** Every spread needs a purpose. Coverage gaps in October become painful problems in March.
- Reach out to club and athletic sponsors.** Get their schedules. Ask about people worth featuring. These conversations lead to better stories all year.
- Promote book sales in school communications.** Newsletter, parent email, morning announcements. Early money funds the program.

## THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Teach caption writing.** Four types — identification, detail, quote, narrative. Captions are the most-read text in the book.
- Build your photo organization system.** Where photos live, how they're named, who's responsible. Establish this now.
- Teach photo coverage reports.** Staffers record names and details after every assignment. This habit saves hours of fact-checking later.
- Continue team-building.** Even 10 minutes at the start of class maintains the culture you built in September.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- Begin design education.** Teach mod structure, visual hierarchy, white space, headline writing before deadline pressure arrives.
- Develop your theme package.** Fonts, colors, graphic elements. Establish them now and apply them consistently all year.
- Move on cover and endsheets.** Spring delivery schools especially need to move early. Loop in your TrailMark rep.

## COACH'S CORNER

A spread with a purpose beats a spread with a topic every time. Before any player touches Canva, they should be able to answer: what story does this page tell, and whose voices are in it?

## TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

Canva is your design platform — fully supported by TrailMark. No proprietary software to learn. Students already know Canva, which means more time on storytelling and less on onboarding.

## EXECUTING THE GAME PLAN

# MONTH 3

**Oct / Nov**

Design is live. Coverage is in motion. Your job this month is to keep the game plan on track, sharpen skills, and maintain the identity you've built.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Lock your theme package.** Fonts, palette, graphic elements, and folio design should be finalized and distributed to all staff.
- Get pages into production.** Students should be actively building in Canva. Every page needs a clear owner and plan.
- Check in on ad sales.** Know where you stand. If you're behind pace, create urgency now — not in January.
- Confirm club and group photo schedules.** Groups missed in fall become gaps in the book.

**THIS MONTH'S PLAYS**

- Teach headline writing.** Active voice. No labels. A headline that makes the reader want to keep reading. Drill until it's automatic.
- Build a peer editing system.** Every page should pass through at least one other set of eyes before reaching an editor.
- Track coverage.** Who's in the book and who isn't? Students appearing in spreads who haven't purchased are your best sales leads.
- Keep social media moving.** Theme teasers, staff spotlights, event previews. Monthly targets keep your audience warm.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

- Prepare for portrait pages.** Know when photo files arrive and have a plan ready. Build portrait templates in Canva before images land.
- Plan holiday coverage.** Assign winter events now, before staffers' schedules fill up with exams and performances.
- Schedule a mid-season celebration.** You're one-third through the year. Find a reason to celebrate before winter break stalls momentum.

**COACH'S CORNER**

Design consistency is not about being boring — it's about being intentional. When every page speaks the same visual language, the book feels like a whole. When it doesn't, it feels like homework.

**TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE**

TrailMark's no-mandatory-deadline model means you submit pages when they're done — not on a publisher's schedule. Finished pages go in early. Your team stays ahead of the clock.

## MID-SEASON MOMENTUM

# MONTH 4

**Nov / Dec**

Production is in full swing. Portrait pages, holiday coverage, and deadline management are all live at once. Keep the clock moving and your team's energy high.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Finalize your portrait photo workflow.** Once files arrive, get them in immediately. Flow portrait pages without delay.
- Review portrait accuracy.** Every name, spelling, and grade level. Errors here are the ones families remember longest.
- Submit completed pages.** Don't wait for a deadline date. Pages that are done should go in now.
- Check ad sales progress.** Know your remaining cutoff dates and communicate them. Missed cutoffs mean lost revenue.

**THIS MONTH'S PLAYS**

- Tag every student on every spread.** Coverage tracking only works if it's current. Tag as you go — this data drives your sales plays.
- Monitor mid-deadline progress.** Don't wait until deadline day to find a problem. Check in mid-cycle and remove obstacles.
- Promote sales at holiday events.** Concerts, games, gatherings — show up with a pitch and a QR code.
- Build holiday coverage.** Personal angles, student voices, community connections. Winter break offers the year's richest storytelling moments.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

- Boost staff morale before winter break.** A deadline party, a gift exchange, a simple celebration. Students who feel recognized produce better work.
- Map spring coverage early.** Spring fills fast. Assign photographers before the semester begins.
- Encourage photography practice over break.** Give students a challenge and let them bring their best work back.

**COACH'S CORNER**

The portrait section is where most of your school community looks first. Get the names right, the flow right, the layout right — then push yourself to make it more interesting than a grid of headshots.

**TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE**

TrailMark books are delivered within 2-3 weeks of final submission. When your team finishes strong, your community gets the book fast — and distribution day energy builds next year's sales.

## HALFTIME ADJUSTMENT

# MONTH 5

**Dec / Jan**

Halfway through. Championship programs make the adjustments that carry them through the second half. Check your stats, fix what's off, and keep building.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Finish selling business and recognition ads.** December is often too late for business outreach. Push hard now, then shift to follow-up.
- Gather club and group information.** Confirm schedules and rosters for every organization that still needs coverage.

**THIS MONTH'S PLAYS**

- Assign a deadline tracker.** One student, one job: maintain a visible shared progress board. Transparency creates accountability.
- Edit with purpose.** Look at completed pages not just for errors, but for opportunities. Does the coverage reflect real people in real moments?
- Audit your copy editing system.** Editors should be proofing every caption, headline, and body copy. If not, fix the system now.
- Refresh photo skills.** Assign specific challenges — difficult lighting, underrepresented subjects, creative angles.
- Use social media for recruiting.** Posts showing your staff doing meaningful, fun work are your best recruiting materials.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

- Begin recruiting for next year.** Staff shirts, classroom visits, posters, teacher referrals. Start now.
- Prep your last-chance sales campaign.** Students in your coverage data who haven't purchased are your best leads. Personalized outreach converts at a far higher rate.
- Map spring events.** Build a spring coverage calendar now. Prom, graduations, spring sports all need photographers lined up.

**COACH'S CORNER**

Students appearing most in your coverage data who haven't purchased are your best sales opportunity. A personal note to a parent is worth ten mass emails. Make it specific. Make it personal.

**TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE**

TrailMark's online sales tools let parents order anytime — even after initial shipment. No pressure to sell a fixed number of books. No unsold inventory. Just books in students' hands.

## THIRD QUARTER PUSH

# MONTH 6

## Jan / Feb

Halfwaydone, production milestones and sales goals need equal attention. Club photos, page submissions, and your recruiting pipeline are all live. Push hard.

### WRAPPING UP

- Audit your personalization data.** Review every personalized element for accuracy before finalizing. Errors here are permanent.
- Review your coverage report.** Assign a student to cross-check names for misspellings. Fix them now — not after submission.
- Resolve outstanding club and group photo gaps.** This is your last comfortable scheduling window. Contact your photographer now.
- Submit completed pages.** No reason to hold finished work. Every early submission reduces end-of-year crunch.

### THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Post a current buyer list outside your classroom.** Peer pressure works in your favor. When students see the list, many decide to buy.
- Explore alternative page layouts.** Profiles, Q&As, timelines, infographics. Visual variety reflects the full range of your school's story.
- Build distribution buzz on social media.** Progress reveals and countdown posts create anticipation — and anticipation sells books.
- Refresh lapsed skills.** A targeted mini-lesson on caption writing or photo composition resets your standard when momentum drifts.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- Start planning your distribution event.** Get it on the school calendar now. A great distribution day turns a delivery into a celebration.
- Continue recruiting.** Post-deadline social media posts keep your pipeline warm. Target underclassmen with curiosity and creativity.
- Plan for summer training.** Workshops are being scheduled now. Early registration means better options.

### COACH'S CORNER

Alternative layouts aren't just a design choice — they're a coverage strategy. A profile spread can feature a student who wouldn't otherwise have their story told. Think about who's missing, then design a page that brings them in.

### TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark's commitment to service means an award-winning adviser consultant is in your corner — not just a sales rep. We run workshops, build curriculum, and show up for your staff the way a real coaching staff does.

## LATE-GAME EXECUTION

# MONTH 7

**Feb / Mar**

Deadline season is where champions separate from contenders. Speed and accuracy matter equally. Keep your team focused, submissions moving, and clock managed.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Review and submit your personalization list.** One final check — then submit. Late personalization creates downstream delays.
- Conduct final ad collection.** If an advertiser hasn't paid and hasn't responded, pull the ad.
- Keep recruiting.** If students are still choosing courses, your window is open. Peer posts and teacher recommendations still move people.

**THIS MONTH'S PLAYS**

- Submit pages as they're finished.** There is no strategic reason to hold a completed page. Submit it.
- Tag every photo used in the book.** Coverage tracking only works if it's accurate. Tag as you go.
- Cross-reference coverage and sales.** Who appears most in the book but hasn't purchased? A personalized note is your most effective remaining play.
- Use creative formats for hard-to-fill pages.** Quote collections, photo essays, data spreads fill gaps without sacrificing quality.
- Keep team morale alive.** Deadline work nights with food and a little friendly competition produce better work than silent panic.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

- Finalize your distribution plan.** Get administrator approval, confirm your date, communicate to your school community.
- Assign spring sports coverage.** Photographers should be assigned before seasons begin.
- Begin archiving this year's files.** Assign a staffer to organize and label files now. Starting in March saves significant time in June.

**COACH'S CORNER**

Missed deadlines have consequences — delivery slips, trust erodes. Build a culture where deadlines are non-negotiable. Then celebrate every time your team beats one.

**TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE**

TrailMark has no mandatory deadlines for submitting your completed yearbook. You submit when the book is ready — not on a publisher's schedule. That flexibility is real, and it takes pressure off your most critical weeks.

## FOURTH QUARTER

## MONTH 8

## Mar / Apr

The finishline is visible. Spring content, final submissions, distribution planning, and next year's foundation are all in motion. Finish with the intensity you started with.

## WRAPPING UP

- Monitor progress toward final deadline.** Check daily. Know which pages are done, in progress, or at risk. No surprises this late.
- Add a colophon or production notes.** Document how the book was made — tools, staff credits, publication facts. This is your historical record.
- Push remaining book sales.** "Limited quantities" messaging creates urgency. Students appearing heavily in the book who haven't purchased are your last opportunity.
- Recruit for open staff positions.** Social media posts, teacher nominations, personal outreach — fill spots for next year before school ends.

## THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Photograph spring events.** Spring sports, prom, senior events — some of the most compelling coverage of the year. Don't let it pass.
- Conduct editor training.** Outgoing editors should actively prepare next year's leaders through one-on-one sessions and written job guides.
- Interview next year's applicants.** Look for curiosity, reliability, and genuine interest in other people's stories. Skills can be taught.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- Plan summer and fall workshops.** Your TrailMark rep can help identify training for advisers and returning staffers.
- Create a distribution letter.** Publication notes, safety reminders, instructions. Hand it out on distribution day.
- Begin planning end-of-year celebrations.** A banquet, awards, a creative sendoff. Your staff earned it.

## COACH'S CORNER

Spring coverage is often the most visually stunning content in the book. Budget your remaining pages accordingly. Don't fill the fourth quarter with work that doesn't match the quality of what came before.

## TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark books are delivered within 2-3 weeks of final submission. Plan your distribution event knowing exactly when books arrive. No guessing. No delay. Just a clean, strong finish.

## CLOSING TIME

# MONTH 9

## Apr / May

Time to close out this season and build the foundation for next. Finalize your staff, archive your work, celebrate your team, and start the cycle again.

### WRAPPING UP

- Run a final spring sales campaign.** Personalized outreach to families of students in your coverage data is your last significant sales lever.
- Finalize distribution logistics.** Communicate your plan on social media and school channels. A great distribution day markets next year's book.
- Finalize next year's staff.** Invite new and returning members to summer training together — shared experience bonds a team before school begins.
- Register for summer workshops.** Don't let this slip. Your TrailMark rep can help you find the right fit.

### THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Start planning next year's book.** Have outgoing staff design theme concepts. Incoming staff can build on those ideas over the summer.
- Gather staff feedback.** Interviews, written reflections, or surveys give you honest insight into what worked and what to change.
- Have outgoing editors create training materials.** Job descriptions, workflow guides, letters to next year's leaders. Make this a requirement.
- Send thank-you notes.** Teachers, administrators, photographers, parents. Gratitude builds relationships that sustain a program over years.
- Balance your account.** Pay your final invoice, close out ad revenue, draft a budget for next year.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- Seek business advertisers for next year.** Renewal letters to existing supporters. Renewal is far easier than cold outreach.
- Submit for critique.** Scholastic journalism organizations offer valuable feedback. Exchange copies with other schools for inspiration.
- Communicate about summer senior portrait sessions.** Families plan summer early. Get this information out before school ends.

### COACH'S CORNER

The end of the season is the best time to start the next one. Outgoing editors who write letters to their successors, advisers who document their process — these habits compound into something exceptional over years.

### TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark's no-annual-price-increase model means you plan your budget with confidence year over year. No surprises. No renegotiations. Just a stable, trusted partnership.

## CHAMPIONSHIP MINDSET

## MONTH 10

## May / Jun

The final whistle. Archive everything, celebrate everyone, and start building next year's team. Championship programs don't stop when the season ends — they start planning the next one.

## WRAPPING UP

- Organize your pages and image files.** Label everything. Indicate which images carry forward to next year's library. A clean archive is a gift to your future self.
- Save your best distribution event photos.** These are your recruiting and sales materials for next year. Archive them where they can be found.
- Submit for judging or critique.** Most deadlines fall in late June or early July. Plan ahead — this is easy to miss in the summer.

## THIS MONTH'S PLAYS

- Begin training next year's staff.** Even four or five summer sessions build skills and culture before the school year begins. This investment compounds.
- Lead a theme development project.** Have incoming staff build mood boards — words, images, colors that capture the feeling of next year.
- Celebrate your staff.** A year-end banquet, individual awards, a meaningful sendoff. Your team built something that lasts. Mark it accordingly.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- Create back-to-school sales and yearbook flyers.** Design promotional materials for fall packets now. Summer is the ideal time to work ahead.
- Plan for summer coverage.** Publicize your crowd-sourced photo link through social media so students submit summer moments before school starts.
- Designate a summer social media keeper.** Your audience should never go quiet for three months. Assign a student editor to maintain accounts all summer.
- Reconnect with your TrailMark rep.** Debrief on this year. Start planning next. The stronger our partnership, the stronger your program.

## COACH'S CORNER

A championship mindset doesn't retire in June. The culture and intentionality you bring to the final month determine the ceiling of next year's program. Finish like it matters — because it does.

## TRAILMARK ADVANTAGE

TrailMark is more than a printer. We are your year-round partner — from theme development to distribution day. Blazing Trails. Leaving Your Mark. That's not just a tagline. It's what we do together.