

# EARTH TRAILS PRODUCTIONS

NEWSLETTER  
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## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



### Profile: Sam Wadsworth

Congratulations to Sam. He is our newest feature producer. Having successfully submitted three assignments, he has been promoted from assistant producer status. As feature producer, he will now create his own pieces independent of those supplied by the production office. We caught up with Sam and talked to him about how he consistently produces such creative pieces.

**E.T.N.** *First off, what was your favorite assignment?*

**S.W.** *Commerce of the River.* I mean I could have done lead mining, flour milling or even fur trading... Then I thought music. I love music—all sorts—and it is a business that has, historically, traveled up and down the river.

**E.T.N.** *That's a pretty creative interpretation of the assignment. Did you do all your research in New Orleans...that is the birthplace of jazz?*

**S.W.** Well that's exactly what I thought. I started out there, but music traveled. Someone like Louis Armstrong started out in New Orleans, but by playing on steamboats he spread his Dixieland banjo-playing jazz all the way up to St. Louis. So I found great pictures, sounds, and video all over the river.

**E.T.N.** *Now that you're a full-fledged producer what sort of brilliant ideas do you have?*

**S.W.** I can't wait to do my own feature. I'm planning a piece that will deal with recreation on the river. Researching music opened my eyes to the connection between the river, music, and people having a good time—Mardi Gras is a perfect example. The French Quarter is another spot I want to explore.

**E.T.N.** *Wow! That's pretty ambitious. Good luck with it. Do you have any advice for assistant producers working towards producer status?*

**S.W.** Absolutely. Produce quality multimedia. Look for that image, sound, or video that sells your assignment. New producers should also pay attention to details. I take a lot of notes while I travel. When I sit down to produce my assignment, I can see how everything is related.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We've hired several new people. Here is a list of frequently asked questions that should help our new team members get started.

**Q:** *What is the best way to learn the ropes?*

**A:** Start out by exploring the river. After you know what is out there, take a look at the assignments that are available. Choose an assignment that interests you and have fun with it.

**Q:** *Where do I find the information for my assignments?*

**A:** You'll find information in the books you read, from the people you talk to, and everything you can see and hear.

**Q:** *How many different sources should I use for each of my assignments?*

**A:** Always check the assignment's requirements for specific media needs. For example, a photo essay will obviously rely heavily upon photos. A short story may only require one photo or a video to set the tone. Some assignments will require all five screens to have media, others won't.

**Q:** *How do I know that I have all the information available?*

**A:** The Executive Producer, Ms. Edwards, will be sending you messages through the Trail Mail system (in your Amadeus Media Composer) to help you along. And don't worry about getting all the information. Get enough to create a well-rounded piece. You might decide that you have to do extra outside research to complete an assignment the way you want. Go for it.

**Q:** *Does Earth Trails provide me with any sort of checklist of criteria?*

**A:** In addition to fulfilling your requirements (listed with each assignment), keep your copy of the Cornerstones of Quality with you all the time. After you finish assignments, use the checklist specific to your assignment and the Cornerstones of Quality as your checklists. Some assignments will benefit from the ABCs of Persuasive Writing and the Field Tested Guide to Problem Solving.

**Q:** *When will I be able to choose my own assignments?*

**A:** While you are learning the ropes, the production office provides you with a list of possible assignments. You can access them on your Amadeus. After you have successfully completed three of our assignments, you will move up to feature producer status. This gives you the freedom to create your own assignments, travel anywhere on the river you want, and tackle any issue that is important to you.

## Cornerstones OF QUALITY

◀ G.U.M.

Our producers create multimedia presentations without G.U.M. errors—grammar, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization).

◀ Content Accuracy

Our producers create multimedia presentations with subject knowledge evident throughout their productions. Information will be clear and correct.

◀ Content Organization

Our producers use information that is presented in a logical sequence. Arguments will be supported with sufficient evidence.

◀ Media Selection

Our producers select sounds, images, and videos which accurately reflect the needs of the assignment. Media selected will be appropriate for the topic.

## ABCs of Persuasive Writing

**A** Always begin by stating your opinion clearly. A well-written persuasive article will summarize the issue and state a position.  
*...We must continue to explore outer space to find answers to important questions.*

**B** Back up your opinion with supporting facts and examples. Opinion is not persuasive unless you support it with facts. Let people know you researched your position.  
*...Astronomical studies and space exploration have provided us with new medicines and more data about crystals, nuclear fusion, gravity, and countless other scientific topics.*

**C** Connect ideas using logic and reasoning. Convince the reader that your position makes sense. Use your own words to connect your ideas and drive home your conclusion. A call to action is one way to end your persuasive writing; other strategies include personal examples and emotional appeals.  
*...Some taxpayers believe that the expense of space exploration is not worth it because we have enough problems on Earth. Yet, space exploration has helped solve mysteries on our own planet. Data has shown us how to take care of the earth, protect crops from disease, manage natural resources, and control pollution. Further space exploration is imperative to the future of our own planet.*

## THE FIELD TESTED GUIDE TO PROBLEM SOLVING



Earth Trails Productions requires creativity and efficiency. Almost every assignment requires you to identify an issue, sort out the details, and emerge with an appropriate solution. With years of experience behind them, our field producers have come up with this step-by-step process for foolproof assignments.

1. Identify and clarify the issue. The first step in reaching a solution for your assignment is pinpointing the issue(s).
2. Gather information. Learn more about possible causes and solutions.
3. Evaluate the evidence. Does it represent various points of view? How accurate is the information gathered? Is it fact or opinion?
4. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives. What are the benefits and consequences? What are the obstacles? How can they be handled? Here's where your creativity is especially important. Draw conclusions from the gathered evidence and pose solutions.
5. Select a solution and put it into action. Follow through on your decision by monitoring the results of your plan.