

# Headline Writing

Invitational Meet B • 2021



You are a copy editor for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School.

Write the headline assigned for each of the given six stories. Use the following system: all upper and lower case letters, spaces, punctuation marks and symbols count as 1. Capitalize the first letter of the first word of each headline. You may use either upstyle (capitalizing the first letter of every word) or downstyle (capitalizing the first letter of the first word and the first letter of proper nouns only thereafter). Remember that main headlines belong on the top line and secondary headlines belong under the main headline. You have **30 minutes**.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry.

## Story 1 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-26

After five outside picnic tables were destroyed by vandals last week, Williams Lumber Yard donated wood and supplies to the Carpenter's Club to build new tables for outside lunch seating for students.

Junior Sojourn Berft, the club president, said they have enough lumber to build six large tables with seating for 10.

"Instead of building traditional tables, we designed ours with seating on all four sides," Berft said. "The table were always crowded, and we never had enough seating in the past."

Principal Freida Johnson said the police arrested four former students for the vandalism.

"We have video cameras outside that filmed the entire incident," Johnson said. "It was a pretty stupid crime. The police had the suspects identified within hours of the incident."

Joe Lieber, the manager of Williams Lumber Yard, said he was happy to help the school.

## Story 2 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-18

In two weeks, the district will debut 15 new school buses with air conditioning. The school buses were purchased with bond money from the 2019 bond election.

"Getting the buses on the road before the hot weather hits is a win for our students," Principal Freida Johnson said. "We didn't expect them until this summer."

The old buses were more than 25 years old, and most were running on "borrowed time," said Greg Burnes, the transportation director.

"Every week we would have a bus break down," he said. "These new buses are long overdue."

Junior Cora Vela said she can't wait to ride in a new bus.

"Not only were the old buses extremely hot in the spring and summer, but they were falling apart," she said. "The seats were torn up, and our bus had holes in the floor."

## Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-26

With the senior barbecue date moving from Saturday, March 27, to Sunday, April 4, senior sponsor Willa Wright is looking for new cooks. Four pastors who normally barbecue for the seniors won't be able to help this year because of church commitments.

"We hated to move the event, but we didn't have much of a choice," Wright said.

The barbecue was moved because of conflicts with the baseball and softball teams. Both teams previously had March 27 open, but due to season changes because of the pandemic, the teams now have games on that date.

"No one was happy with the move, but even the pastors agreed that we needed to move it to Sunday so more students can attend," Wright said.

Senior Diego Cruz said he is trying to talk his father into volunteering to cook.

"He's a pretty good barbecuer, but if he cooks, I want him to talk to the pastors to get their recipes," Cruz said. "My brother graduated two years ago and said it was the best barbecue of his life."

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-16 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 16-24**

Most teams have traditions. The football team touches the Lion paw in the gym before every game. The volleyball team sings Queen's "We are the Champions."

Now the fans of the girls softball team have their own tradition. They paint the mascot on their faces for game days.

"This started at the first game," junior Tillie Vessor said. "About 10 of us painted lions on our checks to show the team our spirit. The girls won that game, and several asked if we would keep doing it."

The fans continued with their face painting, and the softball team continued its wins.

"We are beating teams that we have never beat before," senior pitcher Cindi Ross said. "Sure, we are better this year, but our fans are helping. Last week, we were down by five runs, and their relentless cheering kept our spirits up."

Coach Mae Berry said every team has its superstitions.

"I love that we have a group of dedicated fans who come and cheer us on at every game," she said. "Does the face painting help us win? Well, it doesn't hurt us. I certainly don't want those fans to stop."

Vessor said sophomore Khadijah Brooks paints the lions every week.

"She's an amazing artist," Vessor said. "And her big sister is on the team, so she is there every week."

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-20 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

Most nights cleaning the school is a pretty lonely job for custodian Bob Smith, but last Thursday night while taking the trash to the dumpster, he met a new friend.

"This little opossum followed me from the dumpster all the way back to the doors of the school," he said. "He even tried to come in with me."

Smith tried to shoo the opossum away from the doors, but his new friend didn't want to leave.

"Finally, I went down the hall to finish cleaning the school," he said.

Two hours later, when Smith was leaving for the night, he found the opossum sitting at the same door apparently waiting for him.

"At that point, I realized the little guy was all alone, so I found a paper box and scooped him up," he said.

Smith took his new "Buddy" — the name he gave him — home where he gave him milk through a medicine dropper. Smith's neighbor, a veterinarian, checked out Buddy and said he is in good health and about 6 weeks old.

"Buddy is the perfect pet," Smith said. "He follows me everywhere and has started eating cat food and vegetables now. I never thought I would have an opossum as a pet, and I certainly didn't think I would keep Buddy. But he is gentlest animal I've ever met."

**Story 6 — Write: 1-line headline counting 26-32**

Because of the recent floods, the water at the school is not safe to drink, and all water fountains have been turned off.

"We urge students to bring their own water bottles to school for at least another week," Principal Freida Johnson said. "We hope to have safe water soon, but the city has been overwhelmed by the flooding disaster."

Water will remain on in all bathrooms, the cafeteria and science labs, but none of it is safe for drinking, Johnson said.

"It is safe to wash your hands or use for an experiment, but do not drink the contaminated water," she said.

The cafeteria will use the water only for washing dishes.

"All water needed for cooking will be boiled first," Johnson said.

The school bought 100 cases of water for athletics and the cafeteria.

"I forgot my water bottle yesterday," junior Elijah Ojumuywa said. "Baseball would have been rough without the water bottle from the school."

# DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

## INVITATIONAL B • 2021 HEADLINE WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLES

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critique/judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judges.

1. Headline writing is different than the other contests. It is suggested you pace yourself. You have about 5 minutes for each headline. Don't watch the clock, but be aware of the time you are taking to complete a headline. It is better to have four or five good headlines rather than six mediocre ones.
2. When writing the headline, first highlight or underline all the important words in the story. Then write a sentence based on those highlighted words.
3. After you have your first sentence, go back and begin editing out words. If you have a multi-line headline, separate the lines at a recommended area. This means you should not split phrases or ideas. Make sure all types of phrases — noun, verb, adverbial, adjective and prepositional phrases especially — are on the same line. Continue eliminating words until you get to a point where the headline fits. It may be necessary to re-write the headline one or more times or to take a different approach before you get the key idea. Remember to eliminate all unnecessary words such as article adjectives (a, an, the). In many cases a comma (,) can substitute for the word "and."
4. You may use a thesaurus or dictionary, either bound or electronic. You may write in block letters. You should not be penalized for inconsistency in upstyle or downstyle.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Under no circumstances should you go over the maximum count. Judges are instructed to disqualify any headline under or over the prescribed count.
6. Write headlines using active verbs in either present, future or present perfect tense. Follow the style of the headline — if it is a fun story, write a fun headline; if it is a serious story, write a serious headline.
7. Do not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
8. Normally, the main headline is used to grab the reader's attention. It is not necessary, although it is possible, to have a verb in the main headline when you have a secondary headline. The secondary headline should do one of two things: emphasize the significant aspects of the story or emphasize the unusual.
9. Please note that AP does not have a style dealing with headlines. Most newspapers create their own style; so using numbers or spelling them out is acceptable either way as long as the writer is consistent.

The following are additional basic headline rules for you to follow:

- avoid starting the headline with a verb
- always use single quotes
- avoid using the same word twice in a headline
- use active verbs, not passive verbs
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations
- do not end the headline with a period

## ★ STORY #1

Club designs bigger tables	26
for outdoor lunch seating	25

## ★ STORY #2

New school buses	16
to hit road	11
in two weeks	12

## ★ STORY #3

School needs cooks	18
for senior barbecue	19

## ★ STORY #4

<b>Their game faces</b>	<b>16</b>
Fans start tradition	20
for softball team	17

## ★ STORY #5

<b>Bosom buddies</b>	<b>13</b>
Custodian keeps opossum as pet	30

## ★ STORY #6

School water unsafe to drink	28
------------------------------	----

### Invitational B Meet • 2021 Headline Writing Entry Sheet

All letters (upper and lower case), numbers, punctuation marks, symbols and spaces count as one (1). Place one letter or other unit in the appropriate spaces below. Remember to leave spaces between words. Note that the number of lines you are given on this sheet corresponds to the number of lines required for each headline. **Write your number on the upper right-hand corner of this sheet.**

■ Headline Number 1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

-----  
-----

■ Headline Number 2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

-----  
-----

■ Headline Number 3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

-----  
-----

■ **Headline Number 4**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

\_\_\_\_\_  
*main headline*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*secondary headline*

■ **Headline Number 5**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

\_\_\_\_\_  
*main headline*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*secondary headline*

■ **Headline Number 6**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

\_\_\_\_\_