

# Headline Writing

REGION MEET • 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: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Ever since she learned to sew, senior Aria Grand knew she would make her own prom dress. She loves originality and wanted a unique dress for the event.

Her dress is definitely one-of-a-kind.

“The dress is not what I envisioned when I was 10,” she said. “But I wanted it to reflect the year. This pandemic has made for one unforgettable year. I wanted my dress to be the same.”

Aria spent a month designing, sewing and decorating her dress, which pays homage to her heroes of the pandemic — doctors and nurses.

“The design of the dress isn’t particularly unique, but the decorations are,” she said. “I sewed images of the frontline workers onto the skirt of the dress. I wanted to honor them for putting their lives on the line every day.”

Her date, senior Jack Jonas, also got creative with his wardrobe. He painted images of the red-spike coronavirus on his vest.

“It looks really cool and matches Aria’s dress,” he said. “My mom also is making us matching masks that say, ‘Mask up. Save a life.’”

## Story 2 — Write: 1-line headline counting 26-32

The boys track team will host a spirit night at Backyard Bill’s BBQ Hut from 5 to 9 p.m. Thursday. The team will receive 10% of all sales for the night.

“We are trying to raise enough money to buy new hurdles and relay sticks,” head coach Pat Malone said.

The team will set up 20 tables and chairs in the field next to the restaurant so families can eat outside.

“Coach just checked the weather, and it’s suppose to be perfect,” senior Mike Bubble said. “I hope we have a great turnout. I am a hurdler, and we need new hurdles. Ours are so old that they sway in the wind.”

Bill Cyrus, owner of the Hut, said he also is making a surprise dessert for everyone who orders a dinner.

“It’s an old family recipe,” he said. “You don’t want to miss out.”

## Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-16

For the second year, the city again will sponsor five internships this summer for students who are interested in local government. Applications are due May 1.

“Students will have the chance to help in a variety of policy areas, learn the inner workings of city government and make important contacts within the city,” Mayor Bonnie Iver said.

The internships are unpaid, but hours are flexible.

“I have already turned in my application,” junior Lily Nast said. “I love following local and national current events, and this will give me an insider’s view to what goes on here.”

Students can pick up applications in the counselor’s office.

“If we have an abundance of applications, we may expand to 10 internships,” Iver said.

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 16-22 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

Junior Tonja Tucker has only one memory of her grandpa — he’s playing the fiddle on his front porch.

“I was only 4 years old, but it’s such a vivid memory,” she said. “And I’m instantly happy when I think about it.”

That memory is what pushed Tonja to follow in her grandfather’s footsteps. At 7, she picked up the fiddle, and, now 10 years later, she is one of the most celebrated fiddle players in Texas.

“The fiddle is my happy place,” she said. “When I am playing, nothing else matters. It’s all joy.”

Tonja was the Texas State Champion in 2019 and 2020 and has won titles in Colorado and Arkansas. On Friday, she releases her first album.

“The first song is called ‘For You’ and is for my grandpa,” she said. “I only have that one memory of him, but that one memory helped me find my passion in life. I owe so much to him.”

Tonja’s mother, Brandi Tucker, said her dad would have been so honored that Tonja found the fiddle.

“My dad always wanted me to play, but I was never interested,” she said. “Now, all I want to do is listen to my daughter play and remember my dad.”

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24**

Junior Tyler Childing had a good excuse for being late to third period.

He died. At least for 20 minutes.

Childing and 10 of his peers organized a mock car crash to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving and remind students the importance of safe and sober driving.

“We hope we made an impression on students,” he said. “Teenage drunk drivers are responsible for 17% of fatal alcohol-related crashes.”

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, in 2019, 886 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes where a driver was under the influence of alcohol. This is 25% of the total number of people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes.

“The mock accident definitely made me think,” junior Will Nelson said. “Seeing Tyler dead on the hood of the car freaked me out. I don’t drink, but if I start, I’m never going to drink and drive.”

Childing said his group chose to do the mock crash this week because prom is two weeks away.

“We all know some students drink before and after prom,” he said. “Our message was clear and simple — if you drink, don’t drive.”

**Story 6 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-22**

With the city ending its driver education program, the district agreed to hold a free driving course for students who are least 15 years old. The course runs from June 15 to July 15 and is limited to 20 students.

Registration opens at 7 a.m. Saturday at [leaguetownisd.org](http://leaguetownisd.org).

“We anticipate the class will fill quickly,” Principal Billy Elish said. “This is the first time we’ve offered the class in the summer.”

If completed, students will receive the required 32 hours of classroom instruction and 14 hours of driving and observation.

“I will be online at 7 a.m. signing up,” sophomore Lizzie Oh said. “Driving school was going to cost more than \$400, and my parents said I had to pay. I definitely want to get a spot.”

Math teacher Abe Khalid will teach the course, using district vehicles for the driving portion.

“The district used to offer this class in the 1990s, and I taught it back then,” he said. “I’m looking forward to working with students on something other than math.”

**Region 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

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

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

■ 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

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■ **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

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

## REGION • 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. Highlight or underline important words in the story. Then write a sentence based on those highlighted/underlined words.
3. After you have your first sentence, go back and change or delete 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, adverb, adjective and prepositional phrases especially — are on the same line. Play with words until 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. 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 printed 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. Individual headlines that are under or over the count are disqualified.
6. Use active verbs in either present, future or present perfect tense. Make sure your headline matches the tone of the story. If it is a fun story, write a fun headline; if it is a serious story, write a serious headline.
7. Never 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 the unusual. The main headline does not require a verb. The secondary headline does.
9. 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
  - avoid spelling out numbers (use numerals - 1, 20, etc.)

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