

Headline Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2024



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. **Put your number on your paper.**

Story 1 — Write: 1-line headline counting 24-30

Administrators and faculty will host a community-wide symposium in the auditorium Monday at 6 p.m. to discuss artificial intelligence and its potential impact on students in the district.

“As we keep hearing over and over, artificial intelligence is here to stay,” principal Donna Rother said. “It’s important that our parents and community understand that we in the district are doing everything we can to keep up with changing technology and make sure that we are graduating competent students who are prepared for the future.”

Junior Kayla Jackson said she uses AI chatbots regularly in class to ask questions and gain immediate feedback on her work.

“To me, using ChatGPT is like using a calculator,” she said. “I use it to check my work. I use it to ask questions. I don’t normally use it to do my work for me. I think there’s a sense out there that using AI is the same as cheating. Hopefully, at the event, we can discuss what AI is and how we use it at school.”

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

Color guard performers will appear in a video production on the screens of New York City’s Times Square March 1 as part of the city’s Walk for Kidneys event to raise money for the National Kidney Foundation.

Color guard director Kylie Burks read about the production online and found a call for entries from high school bands, dance teams and color guard performers.

“A colleague shared this flyer on Facebook,” she said. “I thought this was something that our group could pull off. My husband does video production so he made us a slick-looking audition video, and we made it in.”

The National Kidney Foundation raises money to help prevent kidney disease.

“My cousin had to have a kidney transplant two years ago,” color guard captain Marcella Valdez said. “I talked to a lot of the team and Coach Burks, and we decided to take this audition video seriously. In March, some of us will fly to New York and get to see our flags fly in Times Square.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 14-20

Senior Connor O’Malley will perform his original composition “Digital Morning” Saturday at the Texas Music Educators Association’s new statewide Electronic Music Showcase.

During the showcase, selected students from across the state will perform their original compositions using electronic components at Austin’s Paramount Theatre.

“When I found out my piece was chosen, I almost spit out my soda, I was so shocked,” O’Malley said. “I worked for almost a year learning more about music production and finishing ‘Digital Morning’ so it really means a lot to be selected.”

O’Malley created the production entirely using computer software.

“Since the school doesn’t offer any electronic music instruction at the moment, I mostly taught myself using YouTube videos and watching other people compose music electronically,” he said. “It’s been quite a process getting here, but I’m excited for the audience to hear my best work.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-14 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 10-16

Student council's events committee will host a trivia night Friday at 6:30 in the cafeteria to raise money for next year's homecoming dance and prom. Students should form teams of five and arrive by 6 p.m. to sign up and pay the \$50 entry fee.

"Not only will this be a fun event for students, but we think it's a good way to raise money," student council president Carson Radke said. "We pay so much to rent the amazing venues and buy decorations, food and refreshments when we have our big events. It will be good to have some extra in the budget to cover those."

The game will feature six categories of trivia, featuring everything from geography to school history. Contestants will fill in answer sheets and have three minutes to complete each round.

"The winning team will receive a trophy, five free spring carnival tickets and a school T-shirt," Radke said. "We're hoping to make this a yearly event so we're going to buy a plaque and engrave a plate with the team names so it just becomes another part of the school's traditions."

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

English teacher and JV basketball coach Scottie Kerr will run 50 miles in a circle around the school Friday as part of a fundraiser he created to purchase a book vending machine for the school library.

"I didn't just want to raise money to buy books," Kerr said. "I wanted to do this fundraiser to engage the community with their high school. We have food trucks coming out and plenty of seating for people to watch me do these 50 miles."

Kerr set up a GoFundMe to collect \$20,000 to purchase the vending machine and books. There will also be booths set up at the event to collect cash.

"I know Coach Kerr is a runner," sophomore basketball player Johnson Nash said. "He's always telling us about the marathons he's planning to do or the different races he's running. It's pretty cool that he's using his skills and talent to raise money for something that matters. We all plan to make signs and be there to cheer him on."

Despite his running background, Kerr said he's been training for the event.

"It doesn't matter what experience I've had," he said. "This is going to be a 50-mile run. That's a long way. It's going to take me all day to run 50 miles in a circle, but thanks to all this support from the community, I'm sure we'll get where we're going eventually."

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

Advisory council members for the district's CTE career pathways will each present a booth at the CTE trade fair Tuesday, Feb. 20. The fair begins at 6 p.m. and will also feature student groups and local trade schools.

"We encourage all high school students in the district to come check out the trade fair and see what kind of careers are out there for students once they graduate," CTE director Jason Kennedy said. "Our advisers and our student leaders have put together some wonderful presentations that will help people make their course selections before next year."

The fair will showcase alternative options to college as well as ways for college-bound students to get more involved in campus activities.

"We hope high school students will see that going through some of these programs will give them a competitive advantage when they go to choose a medial career," League County College nursing representative Linda McQueen said. "With the clinical programs in the district, students can graduate as a certified nurse's assistant and qualify for other certifications, too."

Freshman Hayden Johnson said he plans to attend the fair to learn more about careers in video game design.

"I know we have a video game design track at school," he said. "If nothing else, it will be cool to learn about the animation and graphics classes I can take to give myself a head start on this career before I graduate."

Invitational B • 2024 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

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

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Headline Writing Contest Tips and Samples

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critiquing/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 five 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. AP Style provides guidelines for headline writing. It is not required for contestants to follow AP Style, but a consistent style is recommended.

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
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations
- do not end the headline with a period

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