

Headline Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2025



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 26-32

The district canceled school next Monday through Wednesday, as heating systems are down throughout the campus and temperatures are expected to be in the 30s.

“Since last week’s winter storm, we’ve been waiting for maintenance crews to repair our HVAC system,” Superintendent Carl Sanchez said. “With another winter storm on the way, we are going ahead and canceling school for the safety and comfort of our students.”

During last week’s cold weather, temperatures inside classrooms fell as low as 52 degrees with no heat on in the building. Even though no precipitation is expected next week, administrators said they are concerned about temperatures.

“I could see my own breath during seventh period,” senior Joseph Morgenstern said. “There’s no way I can sit through a class like that again. I’m glad they’re finally getting it fixed.”

Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 26-32

After parents posted their concerns online about the quality of milk, the district is pulling more than 400 servings of chocolate milk from the cafeterias across the district starting Monday.

Multiple parents posted about students having an upset stomach after lunch and that students reported the chocolate milk was thick and chunky last week.

“I drink a chocolate milk during lunch every day,” freshman Jay Li said. “It normally tastes great. But the last time I drank it, it seemed like there was slime in it or something. I stopped drinking it after a couple sips.”

Nutrition director Mathilda Christianson ran a quality control check after the district was notified of the issue and said all milk was well before its expiration date.

“The milk was all stored properly and nowhere near its expiration date,” she said. “Despite this, there definitely seems to be some type of issue with the quality of the milk, so while we investigate this issue without our distributor, we will be pulling chocolate milk from the cafeterias until further notice.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 16-22

Because of increasing concern over the effect of cell phones on students, the district has formed a cell phone committee to update the district’s policy. The first meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 11.

The group will evaluate cell phone policies in similar districts as it formulates a new policy on student cell phone use.

“Districts across the state are reevaluating their cell phone policies,” Principal Anna Paris said. “Our hope is that by sharing the relevant research with the committee and reviewing some other policies, we will come up with a policy that works for everyone and redirects students toward learning during the school day.”

The committee will include student council members, parents and staff.

“I’m glad students can give some feedback on this policy,” sophomore Lisa Romano said. “It’s important for students to find a balance when using their phones, but the school needs to understand that we also need to learn how to use them responsibly. An outright ban won’t work.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-14 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 20-26

Curly, waffle, crinkled or shoestring — the culinary class will have a french fry-making contest Thursday, Feb. 13.

For the contest, students will be given two russet potatoes and will be allowed to use any ingredients or equipment available in the classroom. A judging panel, which includes Assistant Principal Julia Foster, local restaurant chef Rick Peters and cafeteria manager Eliza Cuthbert, will deliberate and select the top three french fries out of the class of 34.

“My favorite fries in the world are from Five Guys, but I think I’ll make mine quite a bit smaller,” senior Robert Crudup said. “We have to make a lot of decisions like how to cut them and what kind of oil to use to fry them. It’s a lot to think about.”

In addition to fries, students will be able to create their own dipping sauce as part of the contest. The top three winners will receive different sets of cooking tools to use at home.

“Waffle fries are definitely my favorite to eat,” sophomore James Siegal said. I’ve been practicing how to cut them for the contest. It would be awesome to win the tools, but I’m mainly looking forward to having all the fry clout in the school.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

All it takes is \$20, some pompoms and a lot of spirit.

The cheer team will host a cheer clinic for children ages 4 to 12 Saturday, Feb. 15, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the gym. Participants pay \$20 to attend for the full day. The cheer team will donate all money raised to the Leaguetown Heroes Inn, a shelter for unhoused people in the community.

“This is my third cheer clinic to work,” junior Shelby Peach said. “It’s always one of my favorite days of the year, working with young future cheerleaders so they can see what high school spirit is all about.”

During the clinic, the team will teach participants five different cheers and spend time playing games in the gym. At the end of the day, participants will perform three cheers for parents.

“We are so excited to make this year’s donation to Leaguetown Heroes Inn,” cheer coach Madison Cardellini said. “It’s a great experience for the team to select a charity, advertise the event and execute it. They’re working together and learning a lot more than how to show school spirit.”

Story 6 — Write: 1-line headline counting 24-30

The newly formed Creative Writing Club will host its first Open Mic Night on Saturday at Blue’s Coffeehouse at 7 p.m. The club worked together to choose a theme, “Cozy Winter Vibes,” and will offer free hot chocolate to anyone who performs.

“We want the coffeehouse to feel like a cozy fireplace,” club president Roberto Jimenez said. “They’re going to let us hang lights and bring in bean bag chairs and pillows to make the place feel warm and inviting.”

Anyone who wants to perform must first submit the piece to club sponsor Kim Armbrusting to check for appropriateness.

“It’s important we have a safe environment at the open mic,” she said. “No topic is off-limits. We just want everyone to feel safe when they come to one of our events.”

Arielle DeLeon said she’s been working on a new poem specifically for the event.

“Small open mic nights are incredible,” she said. “It’s so cool to watch people stand on stage and be vulnerable while they read a poem or story they’ve written. This event will give students a great way to express themselves.”

Invitational B Meet • 2025 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!

Invitational B Meet • 2025 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 printed thesaurus or dictionary. You may write in upstyle or downstyle.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Under no circumstances should you be under or over the maximum count. Judges are instructed not to consider 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
- 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

★ STORY #1

School to close due to no heat 30

★ STORY #2

Milk pulled from cafeteria 26
after parents report 'chunks' 29

★ STORY #3

District committee 18
to work to formulate 20
new cell phone policy 21

★ STORY #4

Fry Frenzy 10
Culinary students prepare 25
for crispy potato contest 25

★ STORY #5

Cheer for Charity 17
Clinic to raise cash for shelter 32

★ STORY #6

Club to host open mic night 27