

Headline Writing

Region Meet • 2018



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). Write main headlines on the top line and secondary headlines under the main headline. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or entry. **Put your number NOT YOUR NAME on your paper.**

Story 1 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-17

The Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the mayor's office, will open a career counseling center, dubbed the "cube," in the counselor's lobby starting next Monday.

At least four community members will be stationed in the cube to talk with students about possible careers, resumé guidance or immediate employment advice.

"Our town has many professionals who want to give back to our community and our students," Chamber of Commerce President Denzel Delaney said. "When we asked the school where the need was, the administration suggested employment help."

Frances Drummer, the president of LT Bank, said she will volunteer at the cube.

"My goal is to help students with whatever needs they have," she said. "I started working when I was 15 years old, and I remember that first interview. It wasn't easy."

Students can make appointments starting tomorrow through Rosalyn Carruthers, the counselor's administrative assistant.

Story 2 — Write: 1-line headline counting 16-32

For the first time in more than 20 years, the school will have a mascot position on the cheerleading squad next year.

"When I was a student here in the early 1990s, we had a mascot who cheered and travelled with the cheerleaders," Principal Margot Roberts said. "Then, right after I graduated, the costume was damaged in a school fire. After that, the school didn't buy a new one."

The cheerleaders raised \$500 to purchase the new costume.

"It's a nice-looking wolf costume," senior cheerleader Tonya Harpin said. "He's smiling, and he's got a super-cute outfit with a big 'L' on a red shirt."

Cheerleader sponsor Greta Gerson said the cheerleaders have not decided on when to have tryouts.

"We may have them in late May or wait until summer," she said.

Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-24

The construction class completed its year-long project — a three-bedroom house for Habitat for Humanity — last week.

"The students took part in the build every step of the way," teacher Jordan Piel said. "They worked directly with contractors to do more specialized work, such as plumbing or wiring."

Piel said the partnership with Habitat for Humanity started last summer when Leaguetown graduate Christopher Noler donated \$100,000.

"Chris donated for this specific project," Piel said. "He has a construction business, and he said he can never find enough qualified workers."

Noler said he hopes the project will entice students to consider a career in construction.

"I loved every day of the project," senior Paul Anderson said. "I'm not saying it was easy, but it was cool to actually create something for someone else."

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 16-22

The case of the missing jump drives has been solved — by the night custodian.

Last week, computer tech teacher Octavia Spence reported that 60 of her students' jump drives were missing from her classroom. About 30 were removed one night, and about 30 the next night.

"It was weird," Spence said. "There is little value to those jump drives. Who would come back for a second batch of them? I thought it might be a senior prank."

It was no senior prank, unless a group of seniors trained a family of raccoons on how to be thieves.

"When I was cleaning Mrs. Spence's room, I saw lots of little paw prints trailing to the back closet," custodian Woody Harrels said. "I know we have had some raccoons in the building in the past. I figured they were back."

But Harrels found more than raccoons in the closet. In addition to four raccoons, he found all of the jump drives.

"The raccoons were huddling under a box when I went into the closet," he said. "They looked pretty scared."

After animal control took the raccoons out of the closet, Harrels said he discovered the jump drives in a back corner behind a pile of old books.

"It looks like the raccoons were hoarding the jump drives for some reason," he said.

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 18-24 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Thing are bad. Real bad.

Or at least they could be for a \$10 entry fee.

Next Monday, students can try their hand at escaping from jail when the senior class holds its annual spring fundraiser. The class is sponsoring an escape room with a jail theme. Student players will be "booked" for a bank heist and thrown in the slammer. Then, they will have 30 minutes to figure out how to break out of jail.

"Breaking out won't be easy," senior Allison Jannus said. "We tested the room on three different groups of seniors, and only one group figured out the clues to escape."

The escape room will be set up in math teacher Willem Defuel's classroom from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. next Saturday and Sunday. Students can reserve time slots with Defuel starting tomorrow. Students can have up to five students in their escape group.

"Last year's escape room was lit," junior Sam Rucker said. "My group was one clue short of escaping. We will not fail this year."

Jannus said students should sign up early.

"Last year, we filled on the first day of sign-up," she said. "We have the option of keeping the room for a second weekend. We might do that if we have enough interest."

Jannus said the seniors hope to raise \$1,000 for their gift to the school.

"We haven't decided what we are going to do for the school yet," she said. "It depends on how much we raise."

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

Because of a partnership with the local community college and area car dealerships, 15 students can take a free auto mechanic certification class starting June 11.

"This partnership is a great benefit to our students," Principal Margot Roberts said. "We don't have the ability to offer an auto mechanics class here at the high school, but our students have asked for it for years."

Students who participate will attend classes from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday at League County Community College. Students can sign up for the class through an online portal on the high school's website. If more than 15 students sign up, the instructor will interview the students and make his selection based on interest and age.

"I love working on cars, and this could make it a lot easier to pay for college," senior Gary Older said. "Mechanics make good money."

After completing the course, students will be placed at local dealerships for a paid four-week internship.

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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!

REGION • 2018

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. Pace yourself. You have about 7 1/2 minutes for each headline. Don't watch the clock but be aware of the time you are taking to complete a headline.
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, 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 should maintain consistency between upstyle and downstyle. You may write in block letters.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Judges are instructed to disqualify any headline that is over or under 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 feature headline. If it is a serious news story, write a serious headline.
7. Never sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
8. In a main/secondary headline, 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 clarifies, amplifies or emphasizes a significant aspect of the story.
9. The Associated Press 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 headlines rules for you to follow:

- avoid starting the headline with a verb
- avoid using names unless the name is well-known
- use single quotes
- avoid using the same word twice in a headline
- use active verbs
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms
- do not end the headline with a period
- separate two sentences in a headline with a semicolon.

★ STORY #1

Career ‘cube’	13
to help students	16
with employment	15

★ STORY #2

Mascot to return after 20 years	31
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★ STORY #3

Class completes home	20
for Habitat for Humanity	24

★ STORY #4

Bandits busted	14
Raccoons hoarding	17
‘stolen’ jump drives	20

★ STORY #5

Go directly to jail	19
Seniors host escape room event	30

★ STORY #6

Summer auto mechanic class opens	32
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