

Headline Writing

Invitational Meet A • 2023



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: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-24

The Leaguetown chapter of the National Art Honor Society will unveil its “Little Free Art Gallery” project at the end of the art hall Monday.

The club developed the project in an effort to reach its community engagement goals for the year.

“We are so thrilled for the students at Leaguetown to see this project and interact with it,” NAHS president Gordon Butler said. “We got the idea from seeing all the little free book libraries popping up around town. In our gallery, any student is able to leave a piece of art to display in the trophy case at the end of the hall.”

To submit a piece, students should leave their art in the dropbox in the art hall, and club officers will review the pieces and put them on display. Students even have the option to sign up to take a piece they like from the gallery when it cycles out of the display.

“I hope this project makes students at our school realize that anyone can be an artist,” Butler said. “You don’t need to take a special class or anything. Art can come from anywhere.”

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

Vegan lunches will be offered in the dining hall for the first time starting Jan. 23. The additions come after students in the Vegan Victory Club presented the idea to the school board and superintendent in August.

“I’m so excited to have hot lunch options available for vegans,” club president Udani Miller said. “I’ve been bringing my lunch for years, so this will be a welcome change.”

The first week, the dining hall will offer veggie burgers, black bean burritos, mushroom gyros and buffalo chickpea pizza.

“The students gave a very informative and well-researched presentation,” Superintendent Janie Dyer said. “We are using mostly the same ingredients already on-hand, so this program is at no additional expense to the district.”

Story 3 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-14 and a 2-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Student Council will host a fundraiser Jan. 21 called “Color for Change” to raise money for teenage refugees from Ukraine.

Participating students will walk or run a mile around the track and have yellow and blue colored powder thrown in their hair and on their clothes to symbolize Ukraine’s flag.

“We thought this would be a great opportunity for the student body to come together and do something for Ukraine and make our bond as a school even stronger,” Student Council president Blanca Ramos said.

Students will pay a \$10 fee to enter the event, and local vendors will sell items to raise money.

“We have a \$2,000 goal this year, and this event should put us on track to meet that goal,” student council sponsor Jeff Cranmore said. “We want kids to have a good time, but we also want them to know they are doing this for a purpose.”

Story 4 — Write: 2-line headline counting 23-30

A survey conducted by the district has found that students' homework loads far exceed district expectations. After releasing an updated grading policy in July, district officials commissioned a neutral third party to conduct the survey among secondary students to determine how many minutes students spend after school doing homework.

"It's ridiculous for me to have three hours of required homework after staying after school for a few hours to do all my extracurriculars," junior Abigail Jefferson said. "I hardly have any time for sleep let alone family or social time."

This summer, a new grading policy was outlined by a panel of district educators and community leaders, including students and parents. The new policy includes a homework guideline for teachers with homework not to exceed 1.5 hours total, per evening per student.

"There's just no way for teachers to cover all the things they need to cover without giving some homework," Principal Carol Winters said. "There has to be more give-and-take for the AP classes. I know some students have more homework than others, but there's not much we can do about that. After seeing the results of this survey, I hope the district looks at the wording in the policy to make it more clear and more fair for students."

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

Students received a free biology lesson after school last Thursday as a rattlesnake gave birth on the front porch of the school right as the dismissal bell rang.

Some were especially surprised to learn that rattlesnakes are ovoviviparous, which means a female carries fertilized eggs inside her body, then the eggs hatch inside before she gives birth to the live young.

"I really just assumed that all snakes lay eggs, so it was weird to see a huge snake giving birth to a bunch of other live snakes right here at the school," freshman Levi Forreston said. "It was probably the coolest thing I've ever seen at school."

Biology teacher Melissa McHam used caution tape to help keep students clear of the area and make sure the snake was able to finish giving birth and students were able to watch from a safe distance. She then contacted a local wildlife sanctuary to come relocate the reptiles someplace safe away from the school.

"Well, I have my lesson plan for the next week," McHam said. "The sanctuary is going to send us photos and video of the snakes as they release them to the wild. Then we'll talk about their life cycle as well as other species that live in the area. Students should know more about the wildlife in the community where they live."

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

The main high school campus will receive its first large-scale upgrade since 1964 beginning in May. The renovation project will take a full year, and Principal Scott Patterson said the change is long overdue.

"We can't get the building cool in the summer, and we can't get it warm in the winter," he said. "At this point, it's almost impossible for students to get any learning done in the main building on campus."

Since the main building opened in 1964, an auxiliary hall opened in 1989 and another in 1994 to accommodate the growth of the school. The main building, which houses administrative offices as well as all English classes, will be closed for the 2023-2024 school year. The other two buildings, which contain athletic facilities and most regular classrooms and labs, will remain open.

"We aren't exactly sure where our office staff and English classes will work during this renovation process, but we have some portables being installed by the end of the year, which will help us redistribute some of these areas for next school year," Patterson said. "It's going to be a long process, but we've been feeling these growing pains for so long. I know we will feel relief when this project is complete."

Invitational A Meet • 2023 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

main headline

secondary headline

■ 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

■ 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 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 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. 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

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to display student work	23

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★ STORY #3

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for teen refugees from Ukraine	30

★ STORY #4

Survey indicates students	25
overloaded with homework	24

★ STORY #5

Snake, rattle 'n' roll	22
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