

Headline Writing

Invitational Meet B • 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: 1-line headline with each line counting 26-32

The Leaguetown Area Food Bank has partnered with Student Council to provide groceries to households in need throughout the community.

The program, known as the Leaguetown Mobile Café, will collect food from the food bank and park at various locations on afternoons during the week for families to come and collect groceries.

“This is our third year to run the Leaguetown Mobile Café,” Student Council president Anika Tauber said. “We started providing food for families during the pandemic lockdown, and that showed us what a difference we can make.”

The van will be parked in the south parking lot every Friday to provide weekend food for students.

“We have fruits, veggies, bread, milk, pasta and other shelf stable foods,” Leaguetown Area Food Bank director Mark Early said. “We are so happy to work with students in the Student Council to provide this service to our community.”

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

Seniors will meet in the cafeteria at 8 a.m. on Friday to participate in Key Club’s Senior Service Day. Students who signed up to join will be excused from school all day to go door-to-door in areas of downtown and assist elderly residents with yard work, lawn maintenance and any other needs.

“This is something we look forward to every year,” Key Club president Connor Wong said. “I love the look on these people’s faces when a bunch of kids show up to mow their lawn or sweep out their garage. They can’t believe there are young people out here still willing to lend a hand.”

The owner of Texas Landscape Professionals, Kent Gnarly, loaned the Key Club a trailer with necessary landscaping equipment for members to use during the event.

“I did this Key Club project when I was a senior at Leaguetown,” Gnarly said. “It’s cool that I get to keep participating in some small way.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 17-23

Choir students will hear from national a capella performer Jackie Sheridan in classes Friday. Sheridan is in town to perform at the 22nd Annual Leaguetown Music and Arts Festival.

“We are excited to have such a well-known performer in the world of a capella in town to demonstrate his craft to our students and share the story of how he got where he is,” choir director Steve Garms said. “I have been following his work for years, so I’m secretly excited to be able to get his autograph.”

Sheridan grew up in Boston and joined his high school choir before getting a degree from Berklee College of Music. He then performed on three seasons of “Glee” in addition to a number of films.

“‘Glee’ is still my favorite show,” senior and alto singer Brett Laney said. “It’s really cool that he agreed to visit our classes before the festival. My whole family got tickets to the festival so they could see him perform, and now they’re all jealous I might get to meet him.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and 1-line secondary headline counting 24-32

Junior Ashley Swift has become one of the fastest swimmers in the nation, according to Swimming Rate magazine. Swift won multiple races at the Region 2 swim meet in January, breaking two UIL records, one for the 50-yard freestyle and one for the 400-yard freestyle relay.

“I couldn’t believe it when I broke those records,” she said. “I just had really good starts and really good turns all day, and things finally went my way.”

With three regional medals, Swift qualified for the UIL State Championships.

“A lot of us on the team had personal records that day, so I’m super excited to be headed to state with my teammates,” Ashley said. “This is a pretty big deal for all of us, not just me.”

Swift said having her teammates at the regional meet made a difference for all the swimmers competing.

“I love that all our teammates who weren’t swimming came to regionals to watch us do our thing,” she said. “We’re a team. And now, even though we aren’t all swimming, we’re all going to state together as one.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-17 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 24-30

Students in biology classes will begin observing plant cells Monday using new microscopes purchased by the science department.

“We have been waiting for years to receive enough funding for new microscopes,” science department chair Annuar Ortiz said. “Thankfully the district shifted some funding to our department, and this year we are finally able to make that happen for our science teachers.”

In addition to comparing cells from various plants, including sunflowers, tomatoes, celery and carrots, students will be able to identify different parts of a cell.

“Plant cells share common features, but will have different shapes, variations in color and possibly different structures to some extent,” biology teacher Katie Vance said. “But the main thing is that students can identify the cell wall, membrane, vacuoles, cytoplasm, chloroplasts and the cell nucleus and understand their basic functions.”

Freshman Maddy Garlington said she looks forward to projects like the plant observation assignment.

“I’m just excited to be actually doing something,” she said. “Looking at cells on YouTube is not the same as looking at real life happening through a microscope.”

Story 6 — Write: 1-line headline counting 18-24

AVID juniors visited Stephen F. Austin State University Friday as one of their college visits for the year. AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination and is a program that promotes college readiness.

Principal Dr. Logan Jarvis attended with the classes as a chaperone, having attended SFA for his undergraduate degree in animal science.

“I think what I love about SFA is that it’s large enough to have good programs, but small enough that class sizes are small and you get to have a good relationship with your professors,” he said. “You still get that college experience, though. It was amazing to bring some of our students through campus and tell them about my experience.”

Students were able to sit in on an English class, visit a performing arts center, tour a dorm and eat lunch in one of the university’s dining halls.

“I plan to attend a community college for at least two years,” junior Jessica Quigley said. “Visiting colleges gives us a good idea of what’s out there for when I’m ready to transfer.”

AVID students will also visit Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M Commerce as part of their spring college tours.

“Being in AVID has opened my eyes to my different opportunities after high school,” junior Sydney Yurts said. “Plus my AVID friends and I have been trying to find the best ice cream shops in college towns. These tours are helping me map out my future and enjoy my favorite dessert.”

Invitational B 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

■ **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 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. 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
- 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

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