

# Headline Writing

District Meet • 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 counting 26-32

The entertainment marketing class will tour AT&T Stadium next week as part of their sports marketing unit. On the tour, students will visit locker rooms, the state-of-the-art press box and have some free time on the field.

“We thought it would be good to visit the football stadium where the Cowboys play,” marketing teacher Sarah Udem said. “The facility is huge, and everyone we’ve worked with to plan this event has assured me that the kids will be in for something special.”

Members of the Dallas Cowboys marketing team will visit with students, and several of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders will be there to greet them.

“I’ve been looking forward to this field trip since August,” sophomore Andrea Young said. “I want to go into public relations or sports marketing, so this is the perfect opportunity for me.”

## Story 2 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 12-18

Thanks to an ongoing shortage of quality substitute teachers, Superintendent MacIntyre Grady will propose an increase to substitute pay at Monday’s school board meeting.

“Our district simply can’t continue to function by asking to teachers to step in as substitutes when one of their colleagues has to be out,” Grady said. “Hopefully the new pay scale will increase interest in joining our awesome team of subs at the high school level.”

Grady’s proposal includes an increase from \$140 per day to \$180 for certified substitutes.

“After I retired, I started subbing, and while it was hard at first, it became a great way to keep me in touch with my old colleagues, and I love being with the students,” substitute teacher Geraldine Velasquez said. “I can see why people turn their noses up at it, but I love coming here every day to work with kids and getting to go home as soon as that bell rings.”

## Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-21

Sophomores Johnny Thomas and Jordan Wysong have signed up more than 40 students for the first-ever Content Club, a group for students who create internet videos in an attempt to earn money. The first meeting is Friday.

“Johnny and I make funny videos together,” Wysong said. “We started out reviewing videos and games on YouTube when we were in middle school and actually ended up with a lot of subscribers.”

Thomas and Wysong took their talents to the TikTok platform.

“Since we’ve been on TikTok, our account has garnered almost 800,000 subscribers,” Thomas said. “It’s all us reviewing games or doing trends on TikTok. It’s silly, but we’ve actually started making money.”

The two decided to share their tips by starting a new club.

“We’ll meet every Friday in the theater black box, and we’ll make videos and share tips with others who want to be content creators like us,” Wysong said. “Anyone is welcome to bring a phone and ring light and come see what we do.”

#### **Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-16 and 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

After a 29-year career as head football coach, Samuel Harper announced his retirement Friday.

“It’s been an honor to serve as the head coach of this team for so many years,” he said. “After a fantastic playoff run this last season, it’s time for me to retire and give some of our younger coaching talent a chance to show us what they can do in Leaguetown.”

Harper will finish his career with 179 wins.

“I’ve been with Coach Harper these last four years, and he’s been one of the biggest mentors of my life,” senior quarterback Josh Sackomano said. “We’re thankful for all he’s done for us, but we’re sad to see him go.”

The district will conduct a search for a new coach this spring, and district athletic coordinator Valerie Hernandez said they plan to cast a wide net.

“Coach Harper has left an incredible legacy and we look forward to building on that legacy going forward,” she said. “We have sent information out to coaches’ associations in surrounding states, so we hope to have a new coach in place before the end of the school year.”

#### **Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24**

Coach Alan Shelton called in the community volunteer fire department Wednesday to help the soccer team prepare for Friday’s playoff game.

“The weather forecast calls for sporadic heavy rain on Friday night, so I wanted to make sure the team got in a good workout in the rain,” Coach Shelton said. “I think now we’re prepared for Friday.”

Volunteer firefighters used hoses with a light spray setting to douse players with artificial rain throughout practice.

“It was actually a lot of fun,” junior Bradley Carp said. “We’ve been working so hard this season. I know Coach Shelton said this was for serious training, but we were just laughing the whole time. He knows when we’re stressed and knows how to make practice a lot of fun. Plus, the firefighters were cool. They stayed for our team dinner, and we all took pictures afterward, when everyone was soaking wet.”

The varsity soccer team plays Southside in the next round Friday night.

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

School was canceled Wednesday after a sewage and water crew accidentally cut a gas line near the school that morning. The school sent a message to parents alerting them that school would close immediately because of a utility issue but didn’t provide further details.

“My mom had to leave work to pick me up,” freshman Katie Karlowicz said. “They didn’t even tell us why — just that they needed everyone to go home.”

Workers cut the line near Washy Creek Drive and First Street, prompting administrators to close campus out of an abundance of caution at 7:35 a.m., before the first bell rang.

“We are always focused on keeping everyone safe,” Principal Janice Bennett said. “We couldn’t get any clear answers from the city, but it asked us to evacuate the area so we complied.”

School was reopened Thursday morning, and no injuries or further incidents were reported. Bennett said they will request a waiver from the state to avoid having to make up an attendance day.

“The state is usually somewhat forgiving about these things,” she said. “I know the sudden schedule change was stressful for everyone. If we can make it through the rest of the year without another utility mishap, I’ll be a happy camper.”

Contestant's Number \_\_\_\_\_

## District 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

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■ 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

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■ 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

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Contestant's Number \_\_\_\_\_

■ 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!**

## District Meet • 2023

### 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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