

Headline Writing

Region 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 first senior in the barbering class will graduate high school as a certified barber after passing the state test on April 10.

Senior Josue Valdivia now holds all credentials of a professional barber and is looking for a full-time barber position to start after graduation.

“I was happy to score enough points on the state test to become a real barber,” Valdivia said. “I’m proud that I actually know what I want to do in my career. I’m not just cutting people’s hair. I have all the skills of a real barber.”

To become certified, students need more than 1,000 hours of supervised work in the lab. Valdivia has hit 1,048.

“He’s been working hard to achieve this goal, and with such a new program, I’m proud he will represent us as our first certified graduate,” CTE instructor Jason Leach said. “These kids are ready to work and put food on the table by doing something they love and something they’re good at.”

Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 20-26

A new club that promotes tree health and protection on campus will plant a collection of crape myrtle trees along the south driveway in celebration of Arbor Day April 28.

Juniors Bella Wilcox and Corey Feldman started the Arbor Club when the district removed most of the trees on campus after January’s ice storm.

“All the trees we used to have on campus were so welcoming,” Wilcox said. “I understand the district had to remove them for safety reasons, but they were such a huge part of our identity on the front of the school. We had to do something.”

The group approached local nurseries and tree farms who donated 12 crape myrtles.

“Most of the places we went were happy to donate trees to make the school front look beautiful like it used to,” Feldman said. “It will take some time, but we’re excited to see the final result in a couple years.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-16

Members of the water polo team will raise money for travel to an overnight tournament in Corpus Christi. Over the next two weeks, students will sell popcorn, offer tutoring and babysit to raise an additional \$2,000.

“I hope we can raise enough money to spend an extra day at the beach,” junior center Bradley Levy said. “We also want to see the huge aquarium.”

Money raised will help pay for the bus and hotel for the trip.

“These students put their whole heart into this water polo season,” coach Jackson Alexander said. “They deserve to have a little fun on a trip in addition to competing against some tough teams.”

The team went 17-2 for the season.

“We hope going to more tournaments will give us the experience we need to take our season even further next year,” Levy said. “We almost made it to state this year. I know we have it in us to do more.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Two members of varsity choir have been selected to participate in a Choirs Across America concert at Carnegie Hall on May 1.

The performance, called Harmonic Collective, will feature top students selected from choirs around the country. The students are junior Alisha Sarma and senior Margaret Kim, both sopranos.

“The opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York is a dream of mine,” Sarma said. “I was so excited to come to school and show everyone in choir my invitation. When I saw that Margaret had gotten one too, that made us both even more thrilled.”

Sarma and Kim are the only two students selected from the same school.

“It will be an honor to represent the school together,” Kim said. “We’ve been practicing together, and we’ll get to fly out a week before the event and practice together too.”

Choir director Steve Garms nominated the students and said he was surprised both were selected.

“I have had students chosen for similar select performances in the past,” he said. “I normally enter their nomination without telling them about it so the students don’t get their hopes up. What a shock that this time, we got two. As a choir director, it means so much to see students succeeding outside my classroom. I’ve already booked my trip to New York.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 20-26

Members of the varsity soccer team will toss pies at their head coach at Friday’s pep rally as part of a deal they made at the beginning of the season.

“We made the agreement when we started practice in December,” coach Josh Owens said. “I told them if they made it to the state tournament, they could pie me in the face in front of the whole school.”

The team was eliminated in the semifinal round of the state tournament, making it farther than they had in more than a decade, but the players didn’t forget the agreement.

“I think Coach Owens thought it was something we wouldn’t remember,” junior Michael Hernandez said. “He said it in passing one day during practice and we laughed, but no one said anything about it after that. We reminded him as soon as we advanced to state.”

Student council agreed to give the team some time during the pep rally to make good on its bet.

“We’re not just bringing pie plates filled with whipped cream,” senior captain London Dusterfeld said. “My mom is getting some day-old pies donated from a bakery. We’re each going to throw two. I’m picking banana cream and coconut cream because I assume those will make the biggest mess.”

Story 6 — Write: 2-line headline counting 22-28

After collecting more than \$8,000 during homecoming week and saving money in their budget by hosting the winter formal dance at the school instead of a hotel, student council plans to donate more than \$15,000 to the district’s Promise School — a sobriety campus for students recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.

“We knew going into this year that we wanted to make a big impact with our charity,” student body president Felicia Cortez said. “We collected as much money as we could with our events in the fall. Now that we’ve paid the last of our expenses from the winter formal, we can celebrate the huge amount of money we’ve saved and collected for Promise School this year.”

Student council moved the dance from the Hilton to the school gym to save money for the donation project.

“I’m proud of all the work our students have done this year,” senior class president Carson Grandage said. “I know we did things a little differently than normal, but this class is going to make a difference in the community with a significant donation to Promise School.”

Promise School is partially funded by the district but relies on donations and independent fundraising for many of its activities.

“We are grateful for the donation,” Principal Saad Shahabouddin said. “Next year’s Promise School students will be able to go on several field trips and will also be able to buy new computers and science lab equipment thanks to student council’s efforts.”

Region 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 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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