

News Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2021



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 2,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. For two years, Rob Buckley has taught Outdoor Adventure I and II at the high school. In the class, students learn survival skills, archery, camping, first aid and more. The students also have the option to attend a camp during spring break where they spend the week doing ropes course challenges. This year, Buckley is teaching three classes of the course, two Level I classes and one Level II.

This month, the Outside TV network invited the Level II class and Buckley to participate in an outdoor adventure race May 1-5. For the race, the students would trek across 50 miles of mountainous terrain in five days carrying only their backpacks, which they would pack themselves. They would compete against seven other schools. Each school would have a film crew traveling with them, and the network would produce and air three episodes of the race over the summer. The air dates for the show have not been released yet. The first team to finish the race wins \$20,000 for its school, and Outside TV network would pay travel expenses for the group. The exact location of the race will not be released until the day before the students leave. The network said the location would be in Colorado, Wyoming or Utah.

The Level II class has 16 seniors, and all agreed to compete. Principal Lindsay Hamilton said she will ask the school board for approval at its next meeting, March 17. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed March 15.

■ LINDSAY HAMILTON, principal

“Because the class will represent the school, the school board must approve the trip. With the budget constraints due to the pandemic, the school board has been reluctant to approve most out-of-state trips, but since this would not cost the district anything, there is a much better chance of approval. I am supportive of the class and hope the board approves the trip. Mr. Buckley and those seniors could definitely win. I’ve been on a camping trip with the Level II class, and those students know what they are doing. They are pretty extreme. When I went camping with them, they caught or found all of their own food and hiked more than 10 miles each day. I could barely keep up with them, and I run two marathons each year.”

■ ROB BUCKLEY, outdoor adventure teacher

“I was blown away when we got the invitation. This could be such a cool experience for me and my students. The students in Level II are definitely ready for this adventure race. They have honed their skills for the past two years, and I can’t imagine another school with such dedicated students.”

■ ROB BUCKLEY (cont.)

“We all voted to use the money to buy a ropes course for the class and the school if — I mean, when — we win. With \$20,000, we could get one of the best and all of the safety equipment, too. The ropes course wouldn’t just be for our class, either. The Level II students would be trained to be guides, so other classes could use the course for team-building and bonding activities.”

■ PAUL ROCIO, senior

“I can’t wait to do the adventure race. I have no doubt our team will win. We’ve camped together, hiked together and mountain climbed together. We spend almost every weekend together using the skills we learned from Mr. Buckley. Our class is tighter than any sports team at the school, and we spend more time together.

“We’ve already started to strategize what to pack in our backpacks. Each person will carry an essential item that we need so we don’t have any duplicates. To cover that much terrain each day, we need light packs. Plus, we should be able to find much of what we need from nature.”

■ LAUREN WOMACK, senior

“A lot of my friends don’t understand why I love the Outdoor Adventure class. We only have three girls in the class, but we all love it. When I was little, I used to camp in my backyard every chance I got. I feel more at home when I am outside sleeping under the stars. When the network guys came out and spoke with our class, they said only one other school in the competition had girls. That kind of shocked me. Girls are missing out.

“I agree with Mr. Buckley. We are going to win this race. We are well-trained and work as a team. All of us are in great shape and know our survival skills. I can’t wait for the race to begin.”

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

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NEWS WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE STORY

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 judge.

1. Open with a future lead under the present circumstances. In this instance, the story comes out before the board votes on whether the class can participate in the race.

The Outdoor Adventure II class is waiting for school board approval to participate in an outdoor adventure race hosted by Outside TV network. Principal Lindsay Hamilton will ask for approval at the board's next meeting March 17.

2. Use direct quotes and get those quotes early in the story. After you introduce quotes, use the transition/quote formula. Be sure you attribute after the quote. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Buckley said," not "said Buckley.") Avoid stacking quotes. Avoid putting two or more quotes from different people together without placing a transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the action of the story and the quote does not repeat information revealed in the transition.

transition

The race will consist of trekking across 50 miles of mountainous terrain in five days in either Colorado, Wyoming or Utah from May 1-5. All expenses for the trip will be paid for by the TV network.

direct quote

"Because the class will represent the school, the school board must approve the trip," Hamilton said. "With the budget constraints due to the pandemic, the school board has been reluctant to approve most out-of-state trips, but since this would not cost the district anything, there is a much better chance of approval."

transition

The team would compete against seven other schools, and the first team to finish the race would win \$20,000 for its school.

direct quote

"We all voted to use the money to buy a ropes course for the class and the school if — I mean, when — we win," Buckley said. "The Level II students would be trained to be guides, so other classes could use the course for team-building and bonding activities."

3. Use third person. Don't say "our students" or "Our principal" or "Some of our students..." Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say "This race is so cool..." without attributing that quote to someone or "The school should ..." These statements are personal opinions and cannot be made in a news story.

4. Note how in the earlier example of transition/quote, each quote is its own paragraph. Don't be afraid to use one- and two-sentence paragraphs. Journalistic writing consists mostly of one and two-sentence paragraphs.

SAMPLE STORY

The Outdoor Adventure II class is waiting for school board approval to participate in an outdoor adventure race hosted by Outside TV network. Principal Lindsay Hamilton will ask for approval at the board's next meeting March 17.

The race will consist of trekking across 50 miles of mountainous terrain in five days in either Colorado, Wyoming or Utah from May 1-5. All expenses for the trip will be paid for by the TV network.

"Because the class will represent the school, the school board must approve the trip," Hamilton said. "With the budget constraints due to the pandemic, the school board has been reluctant to approve most out-of-state trips, but since this would not cost the district anything, there is a much better chance of approval."

The team would compete against seven other schools, and the first team to finish the race would win \$20,000 for its school.

"We all voted to use the money to buy a ropes course for the class and the school if — I mean, when — we win," Buckley said. "The Level II students would be trained to be guides, so other classes could use the course for team-building and bonding activities."

Senior Paul Rocio shares Buckley's confidence that the class will win.

"We've camped together, hiked together and mountain climbed together," he said. "We spend almost every weekend together using the skills we learned from Mr. Buckley."

Hamilton said she hopes the school board gives the class the thumbs up for the trip and believes the class could win the race.

"I've been on a camping trip with the Level II class, and those students know what they are doing," she said. "They are pretty extreme. When I went camping with them, they caught or found all of their own food and hiked more than 10 miles each day. I could barely keep up with them, and I run two marathons each year."

For the race, the students would carry only their backpacks, which they will pack themselves.

"We've already started to strategize what to pack in our backpacks," Rocio said. "Each person will carry an essential item that we need so we don't have any duplicates."

The school also would have a film crew traveling with them, and the network would produce and air three episodes of the race over the summer. The air dates have not been released yet.

"We are going to win this race," senior Lauren Womack, who is one of three girls in the class, said. "We are well-trained and work as a team. I can't wait for the race to begin."