

# It's all in your **Head** (line)

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# The Headline Writing Contest:

- Six stories, six headlines
- 45 minutes (about 7 minutes a story)
- Count parameters
- About speed and creativity

**Sell the story.** A good head involves readers much like a clever ad.

**Tell the facts.** Precise and specific heads inform readers instantly of what they may or may not want to read.

**Be accurate.** All facts, names, numbers, whatever must be correct.

**Be objective.** Don't editorialize.

**Simple but precise.** No fancy words. No weird constructions. Find the right word to communicate the meaning.

**Make tone fit content.** Serious story. Serious headline. Funny story. Funny headline.

# Two types of stories:

- Straight news stories – usually with a 1, 2 or 3 deck headline
- Feature stories – usually with a Main Headline (creative), with a secondary headline

# The News Story

## **Story 1 — Write: 2-line headline counting 14-21**

During spring break English teacher Mary Tyrant and math teacher Robbie Griggs will teach a free SAT-prep class for juniors and seniors. Students can sign up for the four-day class during lunch starting Monday, Feb. 6.

The prep class will run from 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Thursday of spring break. The teachers are capping the class at 30 students. Sign up is on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Mr. Griggs and I know that many of our students can’t afford an SAT prep class and that puts them at a disadvantage,” Tyrant said. “When we proposed the class to Principal Dawn Brown, she was immediately supportive.”

Junior Dennis Fontego said his mom is pushing him to sign up.

“I’m on the baseball team, so I can’t go anywhere during spring break since we have practice,” Fontego said. “I do want to improve my SAT score. I guess I will sign up Monday.”

During spring break English teacher Mary **Tyrant and** math teacher Robbie **Griggs will teach a free SAT-prep class for juniors and seniors.** Students can sign up for the four-day class during lunch starting Monday, Feb. 6.

Tyrant and Griggs will teach -30  
free SAT-prep class for upperclassmen – 37

**Teachers offer – 14**  
**free SAT-prep class - 19**

# The Feature Story

**Write: 1-line main headline counting 9-16 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 19-25**

Get your cameras ready.

The yearbook is sponsoring a student photography contest this month. To win, students must shoot five different photos that show “Leaguetown Live.” The winning photos will be published in the yearbook. Photos are due Feb. 24.

“Since Instagram and Twitter, we’ve noticed that many of our students are pretty good photographers,” yearbook editor Shanna Mikel said. “We thought we would give a student a chance to show off his or her skills and get a few minutes of fame in the yearbook.”

The five photos must be candid photos and contain at least one current student.

“We are not looking for selfies or a bunch of photos of friends giving the peace sign,” Mikel said. “We want to see emotion and action.”

Junior Salli Greene said she’s borrowing her dad’s camera so she can shoot the basketball game Friday night.

“I always wanted to take the photojournalism or yearbook class, but I never had time in my schedule,” she said. “I think this is a great idea. I already have several ideas for the photos, but I don’t want to share them with everyone.”



What are some key words  
we could use in the main  
headline?

# **Ready to snap? - 14**

Yearbook sponsors contest - 25

to showcase student photos - 26

# Kinds of Head(line)s

- 1-line-headline

**Nobel panel gives up knockin' on Dylan's door**

- 2-line-headline

Backers hot for chili  
as U.S. official food

- 3-line-headline

NHS to sell  
coffee, tea  
at lunch Friday

- Main/secondary headline

# **Kicking the habit**

Two former nuns married  
in civil ceremony in Italy

- Main/secondary headline

# **Meat and Greet**

Barbecue expected to attract crowd for freshman orientation



- Main/secondary headline

# **So long, sucker**

Man sneezes out part of toy dart after 44 years

- Main/Secondary headline

# **Funky Friday**

Young skunks spray  
odor in locker room

**Headline**

**Tips**

- Be as specific as possible in your headline. Get to the heart of the news.

**(not good)**

**School board discusses items  
at heated Tuesday meeting**

**(better – more specific)**

**2 board members walk out  
over budget argument**

- Avoid semicolons. The headline should be a single sentence, not a collection of sentences.

Hurricane strikes;  
school swamped;  
pep rally cancelled

Better:

Pep rally cancelled  
after hurricane  
slams into school

- Don't pad headlines with school initials or dates. Also, avoid initials and abbreviations in headlines.

Too vague...

**2017 MHS FFA plans  
to hold annual rodeo**

- More specific...

## **Willie Nelson to appear at FFA rodeo Saturday**



- Avoid be verbs and linking verbs. Action. Shoot for present tense or future tense.

(weak)

**Spongebob will  
attend Mensa meeting  
purely as spectator**

(better)

**Spongebob to attend  
Mensa meeting  
purely as spectator**

- No articles. Use a comma instead of “and”

**Heat wave blisters California, Texas**

- No clichés.

**Swimmers dive into season**

**Golfers swing into action**

**Exchange students say ‘Hasta la vista’**

**Math Club multiplies**

**Football team tackles opposition**

**Drama Club acts up**

**Military recruiters say, ‘I Want You’**

- Do not repeat key words or phrases from the main headline into the secondary headline

# **Pocket lasers banned**

## **Authorities ban laser pointers**

Just in case you didn't catch it, the repetition is the word "laser" and "ban"

# **Pocket lasers banned**

**Principal cites injuries, class disruptions**

This headline provides twice as much information in the same amount of space! Yippee!

- Avoid "headline-ese" either in the form of simplified spellings or odd synonyms.

**Board to meet  
destroys  
Tuesday nite**

**Vball team**

**Senior play  
to continue  
thru Easter**

- Avoid initials or abbreviations, unless the initials are instantly recognizable. From the UT-Austin's Daily Texan:

**ACLU considers  
lawsuit for SFA's YCT**

- Avoid passive verbs in headlines.

# **Internet fraud is cause of worry for administrators**

Better:

Internet fraud  
concerns  
administrators



- It is permissible to use implied passive verbs.

**Mosquitos (are) biting into summer fun**

**Federal grant (is) renewed**

- Put modifiers and words modified on the same line

**Fire guts Fred Astaire  
Dance Studio, 2 injured**

- Do not end a line with a preposition

**Baseball team ready for  
playoff game, coach says**

- Do not end a line with a preposition

**No love lost between  
Longhorns, Sooners**

- When separating two sentences in a headline, do so with a semi-colon.

**Bardwell named Educator of the Year;  
experts call it sign of plunging standards**

- The main headline should never be dependent on a kicker or other secondary headline.

**(incorrect)**

**If students meet goals,**

Principal promises open campus lunch

(correct)

**Out to lunch**

Principal promises open campus if goals met

- Alliteration in headlines should be used sparingly and in appropriate situations.

Acceptable:

## **New Planetary Puzzlers**

A distant, oversize world causes cosmic confusion

# **Take 'meowt' to the cat show**

Annual festival of felines begins today



- Unacceptable:

# **Cheney' s chest chink**

Vice president' s thumper goes thud

- The headline should reflect the mood of the story.

**Band itching for practice  
as soon as mosquitos killed**

- Be careful of word use and misinterpretation.

## **Bears capture playoff birth**

**BE CAREFUL AND  
THINK!!**

**Or you will end up with  
headlines like these ..**

**Federal Agents,  
Raid Gun Shop,  
Find Weapons**

**Panda mating fails;  
veterinarian takes over**

**Be sure to eat  
right before surgery**

**Miracle cure kills fifth patient**



Homicide Victims Rarely Talk to Police

Breathing oxygen linked to staying alive

Mayor to homeless: Go home

Woman missing since she got lost

Rain biggest factor in flooding

Autos Killing 110 a Day--Let's Resolve to Do Better

City unsure why the sewer smells

Health officials: Pools, diarrhea not a good mix

Tight end returns after colon surgery

Hunter mounts huge black bear

**Kicking baby  
considered  
to be healthy**

**Crowds rushing to see  
Pope trample 6 to death**

# **Police Say Man Hid Crack in Buttocks**

## A few more rules ...

- Avoid contractions
- Do not end a headline with a period
- Avoid names unless they are easily recognizable
- Always use single quotes in headlines

# Let's look at a story:

Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 1-line secondary headline with each line counting 26-32

Junior Rick Rusting loves the cold. In fact, he loves it so much that he joined the local Polar Bear Club.

“I am definitely the youngest guy in the club,” he said. “I think the average age is about 65. I wasn't sure I would fit in, but I am having a blast with these guys.”

The Polar Bear Club visits bodies of water, like springs and even the ocean, all winter long for chilly swims.

“We went to Barton Springs in Austin last month,” Rusting says. “The water is 68 degrees year round. Really it wasn't that cold, but getting out was rough. Austin had a cold snap that weekend, and it was barely 30 degrees.”

Rusting said he heard about the Polar Bear Club from his great uncle who had been a member for years.

“I thought I was too young to join,” Rusting said. “But there is no age requirement.”

In late February, the club is headed to Port Aransas.

“I hate the beach in the summer,” Rusting said. “It's hot and miserable. I may actually enjoy the beach in the winter.”

# **UnBEARably cold**

**15**

Junior joins wintry swim club

29



## Let's look at a story:

**Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 14-21**

Like many high school teens, Shanda Hall fell in love during her sophomore year.

But it wasn't a boy that caught her affection.

Shanda fell deeply in love with the *Twilight series of books*.

"I've read all of the books three times already," she said. "I can't get enough of them."

To honor her love, Shanda started the Twilight Club so students could get together to discuss the books and movies and plan events. The club meets during lunch on Wednesday in Room 203.

"When I first proposed this club, my friends thought I was a little crazy," Hall said. "But now, three months later, we have 25 members."

Shanda said as more students read the books and see the movie, she expects her club to grow even larger.

"Almost everyone who reads the book or sees the movie loves the series," Shanda said.

The next large event for the club is a Vampire Camp Out in April.

"We all plan to read our favorite passages by the fire," she said. "It's not like we believe in vampires, but we believe in the words and messages of the books."

Junior Christine Razor said she joined the group about a month ago.

"Basically, we are a book club/movie club," she said. "It's just that we only discuss one particular series of books and movies."

# Twilight Zone 13

Book club focuses	17
on vampire series	17