

# BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Remember to register your attendance and  
complete session evaluations.

Session numbers are in your program.



**Attendance**



**Online Handouts**



**Session Evaluations**

The logo for UIL News Writing features the letters 'UIL' in a dark blue, blocky font. The 'U' contains a white silhouette of the state of Texas. A red five-pointed star is positioned above the 'I'. To the right of the 'UIL' is the text 'News Writing' in a bold, red, sans-serif font, with 'News' on the top line and 'Writing' on the bottom line.

**UIL** **News**  
**Writing**

**“Good news is good news.”**  
**Alyssa Boehringer**

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# News Writing

Gives the reader information – starting with the most recent information/events. It flows from most important to least important.



**What is news?**  
**It is information only.**

– Walter Cronkite  
Former CBS news anchor

# News stories are...

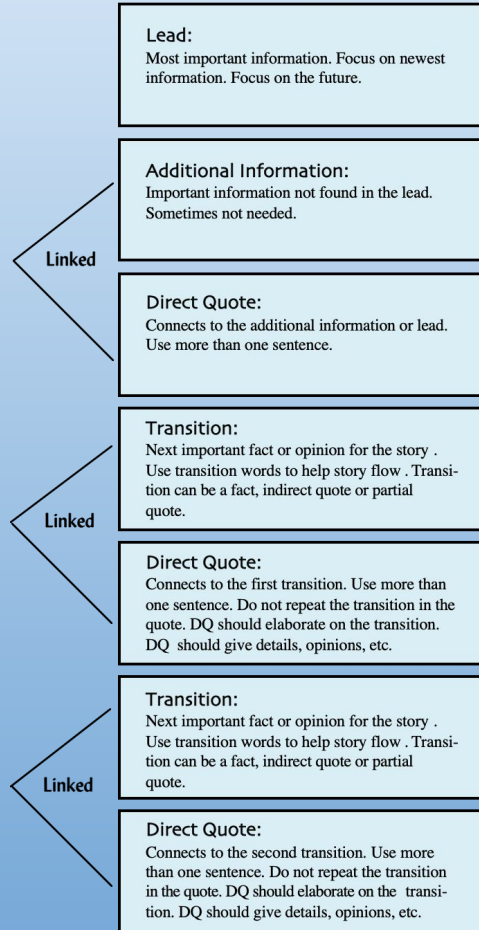
- Objective (anything that is not an absolute fact must be attributed)
- Written in third person
- Written in short paragraphs
- Accurate
- Timely
- Quote/transition formula
- Concise
- Written in active voice

# Inverted Pyramid

Most Important Information

Least  
Important  
Information

# Transition/Quote Formula



**Side Notes:**  
1) Each box is a new a paragraph.  
2) Story should flow from most important to least important information.

and so on... until the story is complete

**Let's talk  
about leads.**



# Leads...

- Most important information
- Newest information
- Focus on the future

**Who is your audience and what will they care about the most?**

# Types of Leads

- Most news stories use a summary lead
  - 5 W's and the H, starting with the most important
    - Who - probably not
    - What - yep
    - When - probably not
    - Where - probably not
    - Why - yep
    - How - yep

# The 'Who' lead

**Definitely NO!**

Principal Joe Blow announced Tuesday that students will no longer be allowed to leave campus for lunch.

**Avoid leading with the name of a boring school employee. If you start with the who, they better be special.**

# The 'Who' lead

Actor Chris Hemsworth, who plays Thor in the Marvel movies, will visit the high school Thursday about being a “real-life superhero.”

**Who leads are also acceptable when talking about a group.**

Students will no longer be able to leave campus for lunch after Principal Joe Blow announced a new policy Tuesday.

# The 'When' lead

**Don't start with the time element.**

NO:

On Tuesday, Principal Joe Blow announced students will no longer be able to leave campus for lunch.

STILL NO:

Starting Thursday, students will no longer be able to leave campus for lunch.

# The 'When' lead

Maybe if the date IS the story, but even then probably not.

# The 'Where' lead

NOPE:

At the school board meeting, Principal Joe Blow announced that the school will no longer off-campus lunch.

**No one cares about the school board meeting!**

MAYBE:

In the principal's office, the senior class built a mini go-cart to protest the cancellation of student parking on campus.

# Leads that work

If a group of parents can't change Principal John Roberts' mind about his ban on the 2019 class shirts, seniors say they might wear the shirts to school Friday, an act that could get them suspended.



# Leads that work

After driving a sick student to an urgent care clinic in his personal car, varsity football coach Ned Winter faces possible termination for violating district policy.

# Leads that work

After four car accidents last month, Principal Stan Lebowski announced Friday that seniors will not be able to leave campus during lunch.

**So how do you  
write a good lead?**

# Writing a lead

- Read the prompt
- Find the newest information in the prompt
- Beware of older or more controversial news
- Write one or two sentences summarizing the “new” news including as many of the other W’s and the H’s as possible
  - Avoid the who, where and when
- Keep it in third person, concise and to-the-point
- No need to mention the word Leaguetown
- Do not editorialize

# News Writing

District Meet • 2022



You are a reporter for the League-town **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 3,400 students enrolled in grades 9-12. On Jan. 10, the school board pulled 10 books from the high school library and banned them from the campus. Teachers may not refer to or use any part of the books for a class. The books are:

1. "Brave Face" by Shaun David Hutchinson
2. "The Handmaid's Tale The Graphic Novel" by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault
3. "In the Dream House" by Carmen Maria Machado
4. "None of the Above" by I.W. Gregorio
5. "The Nowhere Girls" by Amy Lynn Reed
6. "Out of Darkness" by Ashley Hope Pérez
7. "Red at the Bone" by Jacqueline Woodson
8. "Flamer" by Mike Curato
9. "Shout" by Laurie Halse Anderson
10. "V for Vendetta" by Alan Moore

Parents who spearheaded the initiative said the books are "too graphic" and "inappropriate" for teens. The books contain themes of LGBTQ+, racism, violence and sex. None of the banned books were used in English classes, but they were in the school library.

After the books were banned, a group of 20 students created Book Freedom to organize and protest the action. Book Freedom is not a student club and meets off campus. Approximately 150 students have joined the organization since its inception.

On Friday, April 1, Book Freedom will host a Read-In during lunch in the cafeteria. Each member will bring one of the 10 banned books and read it silently during lunch. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Tuesday, March 29.

## ■ LI WEI, senior and president of Book Freedom

"It is a sad commentary on our society that we are still banning books. A few loud parents got the attention of the school board, and it listened to them. It's disgraceful. Book Freedom was created solely to fight this censorship. We may not be as loud as those who wanted these books banned, but we are definitely larger. And our group is growing every day. We had to move our last meeting to the community center because everyone couldn't fit in my backyard.

"All of the banned books deal with either LGBTQ+ issues, sex, violence and/or racism, and they were singled out because of these themes. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am offended and disgusted.

"The Read-In is only our first step. It's a respectful way for those parents

and school board members to see how many of us support the Book Freedom mission and oppose censorship. Right now, we have 149 members, but many students who are not members asked if they could participate in the Read-In. We welcome all students to join us.

"While this is not a disruptive protest, we are breaking the rules because all of these books have been banned from campus, which is ridiculous. I have informed Principal Bearinger about the Read-In, and she said if we are not disruptive, then she will not confiscate our books. Honestly, I think she supports us, but she can't say it. Several teachers also have told me they support getting those books back in our library. We don't want the teachers to join our group, though, because we don't want them to get in trouble.

"Banning books is a slippery slope. Start with 10 and then the list grows. No one was forced to read any of those books. They were in the library, not on a mandatory reading list. Those books talk about subjects that some students experience on a daily basis. To deny students those books is to deny them their identity."

■ **BARBARA BEARINGER, principal**

"Li did tell me about the Read-In. As long as the students are not disruptive, we don't plan to intervene. I know the books have been banned from campus, but my assistant principals have more important things to do than pick up books from students.

"I would rather not comment on the book ban."

■ **DANIEL GOTHAM, junior**

"I will be participating in the Read-In. I haven't read any of the banned books, but now I will. The parents who convinced the board to ban these books achieved something English teachers have tried to do for years, and that is getting students to read more. I am not super political and don't belong to Book Freedom, but I support our librarian and our administrators. A few parents should not decide what is in our library."

■ **CELIA TAGGERT, parent who organized the book ban**

"Those 10 books have no business being in a public high school. They are graphic and inappropriate. I have a freshman, and I don't want her accidentally stumbling onto one of the those books. I've heard about this Read-In, and the administration needs to shut it down. Those books are not supposed to be in the school, period. If the administration doesn't act, then the parents will. The school board listens to us.

"That club needs to be disbanded. They should not be allowed to gather at school."

■ **GIGI BROWN, librarian**

"This has been an incredibly difficult few months for me and my staff. The district has asked me not to comment specifically on the book ban, and I will respect that request."

■ **ANDRIA GREEN, senior**

"I am not part of Book Freedom, and I won't be participating in the Read-In. I've read a few of the books on the list. They are pretty graphic, but I don't think they need to be banned. Maybe they shouldn't be on the regular library shelves, or maybe students should have to be 17 to check them out. Banning books is never the answer."

**What is essential  
for this lead?**

# Solid lead

To protest the school board's book ban, Book Freedom, a student group that opposes censorship, will hold a Read-In Friday in the cafeteria. Students will each bring one of the 10 banned books and read it silently during lunch.



# Another solid lead

Members of an off-campus student group, Book Freedom, will bring banned books to lunch Friday for a Read-In protest.

Students formed the club after the school board banned 10 books for being too “graphic” or “inappropriate.”

**Let's talk about  
direct quotes.**

# **The KEY is...**

Find the people and the quotes that matter to the story.

# Direct quotes...

- Can be longer than one sentence
- Should have attribution after the first sentence of the quote
  - Attribution should be Noun then Verb
  - Correct: senior Bob Rodriguez said.
  - Incorrect: said senior Bob Rodriguez.
- Do not stack two quotes back-to-back without a **transition**.

# Direct quotes...

- Should not repeat the transition/lead that came before them.

For example:

Bearinger, who declined to comment on the book ban, said her administration will not intervene in the Read-In.

“We will not intervene in the Read-In,” she said. “My assistant principals have more important things to do.”

# Direct quotes...

- Should be linked from the paragraph before them. The quote should elaborate on the previous paragraph.

For example:

Celia Taggert, the parent who spearheaded the book ban, said the administration needs to shut down the Read-In.

“Those books are not supposed to be in the school, period,” she said. “If the administration doesn’t act, then the parents will.”

# Lead and first quote

To protest the school board's book ban, Book Freedom, a student group that opposes censorship, will hold a Read-In Friday in the cafeteria. Students will each bring one of the 10 banned books and read it silently during lunch.

“While this is not a disrupting protest, we are breaking the rules because all of these books have been banned from campus, which is ridiculous,” senior Li Wei, the president of Book Freedom, said.

**What comes next?**

# First Transition

The school board banned the 10 books after a group of parents said the books were “too graphic” and “inappropriate” for teens. None of the banned books were used in English classes, but they were in the school library.

**What comes next?**



# Direct Quote

**It should elaborate on the previous transition.**

“All of the banned books deal with either LGBTQ+ issues, sex, violence and/or racism, and they were singled out because of these themes,” Wei said. “As a member of the LGBTQ+ community I am offended and disgusted.”

**OK, then what?**

## **More transitions and quotes, linked together**

Celia Taggert, the parent who spearheaded the book ban, said the administration needs to shut down the Read-In.

“Those books are not supposed to be in the school, period,” she said. “If the administration doesn’t act, then the parents will. The school board listens to us.”

Wei said she informed Principal Barbara Bearinger about the Read-In.

“She said if we are not disruptive, she will not confiscate our books,” said said. “Honestly, I think she supports us, but she can’t say it.

**Who is important to your story?**

**Which quotes are essential to your story?**

**Let's talk about  
transitions.**

# Transitions

- Extremely important!
- Hold the story together
- Link paragraphs together
- Can be a:
  - Fact
  - Indirect quote
  - partial quote

# **Fact Transition - my fave**

None of the banned books were used in English classes, but they were in the school library.

# Partial quote transition

The school board banned the 10 books after a group of parents said the books were “too graphic” and “inappropriate” for teens.

# Transitions

- Use transitional words to help with the flow, as needed.
  - After all
  - Also
  - Finally
  - In addition
  - However
  - Otherwise
  - Then

For example:

However, none of the banned books were used in the school library.



# Transitions

- Use parts of direct quotes and information to create the transition
- Facts go in transitions. Opinions go in direct quotes.
- Beware of indefinite terms leading your transitions
  - Many
  - Some
  - Most
  - These are weak!

# Transitions - example

## Li Wei, senior and president of Book Freedom

The Read-In is only our first step. It's a respectful way for those parents and school board members to see how many of us support the Book Freedom mission and oppose censorship. Right now, we have 149 members, but many students who are not members asked if they could participate in the Read-In. **We welcome all students to join us.**"

**Transition** Book freedom has 149 members, but Wei said other students have asked if they can join the Read-In.

**Direct  
Quote**

**"We welcome all students to join us," she said.**

# Transitions - example

## **From the situation**

Parents who spearheaded the initiative said the books are “too graphic” and “inappropriate” for teens. The books contain themes of LGBTQ+, racism, violence and sex. None of the banned books were used in English classes, but they were in the school library.

**Transition** The school board banned the 10 books after a group of parents said the books were “too graphic” and “inappropriate” for teens. None of the banned books were used in English classes, but they were in the school library.

**Do not copy word-for-word  
directly from the prompt!**

**Let's talk about  
the ending.**

# The end

- End with a strong quote
  - Save one of your strong summary quotes. This is your **kicker quote**.
- Tie the package up with a pretty bow
- Do not write your own ending or end on a transition.

# The end - example

“Start with 10 and the list grows,” she said. “No one was forced to read any of those books. Those books talk about subjects that some students experience on a daily basis. To deny students those books is to deny them their identity.”

**Let's review.**



**How should you avoid starting your lead?**

**What is attribution? What  
needs attribution in a news  
story?**

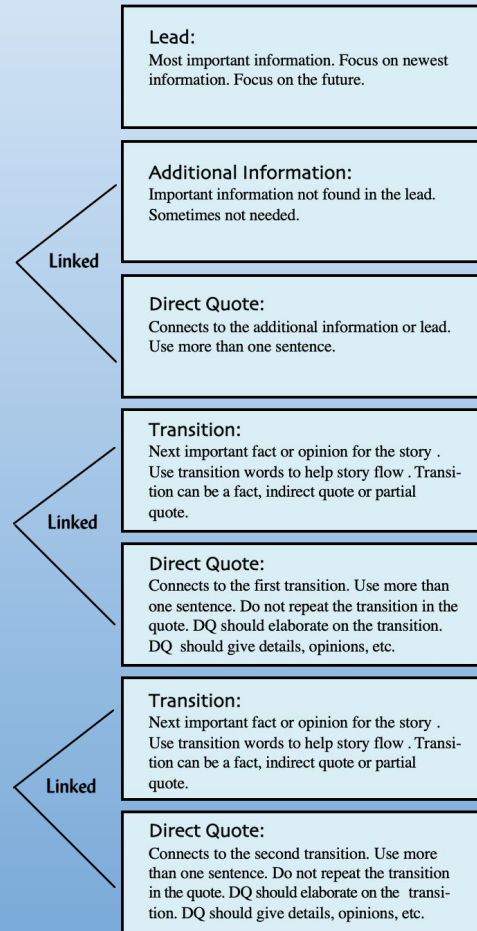
**Who should always be quoted  
in your story?**

**Where do you find  
information for a transition?**

**What is a “must have” for your lead?**

# Remember transition/ quote formula!

## Transition/Quote Formula



Side Notes:  
1) Each box is a new a paragraph.  
2) Story should flow from most important to least important information.

and so on... until the story is complete

# Just say no

- Using the word “Leaguetown.” Students know where they go
- Writing a feature lead for the news story
- Adding facts that aren’t in the prompt
- Editorializing - keep your opinion out of the story
- Use first and second person. Common error: “our school”
- Messy handwriting, poor grammar and spelling
- Long paragraphs
- Misspelled names - they’re right there in the prompt!
- Trying to use all the information
- Stacking quotes
- Forgetting to quote students
- Start transitions with indefinite terms

# Checklist for news stories

- Are the most important and most recent facts first? Future event!
- Is the story accurate? Are sources identified fully?
- Are the paragraphs short? 1-2 sentences
- Is the sentence structure varied in the story?
- Is the story neat and double-spaced so it's easy for the judges to read.
- Does the story flow?
- Did you use active voice?



**So how do I win?**

**Lead with the future event.**

**Get the news peg in the lead.**

**Using transition/quote formula.**

**Using “correct” sources and quotes.**

# On contest day

- Read the whole prompt
- Look for the newest information and underline it
- Highlight or underline the 5 W's and the H
- Highlight or underline the most important people and essential quotes
- X out any stupid or inane quotes
- Pay attention to the "additional information"
- Write your How, Why or What lead.
- Write an "additional info" paragraph if needed
- Use a strong direct quote from the main source
- Write a transition about the next important thing

# On contest day

- Use a direct quote related to the information in the transition above. If it's an indirect quote, use a direct quote from that same person
- Write another transition about the next most important thing
- Another direct quote
- Keep going
- End with a kicker quote
- Put your contest number on each page and staple before turning in

# Let's write a lead.



# News Writing

Invitational A Meet • 2022



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**

Leaguetown High School has 1,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. In January, Superintendent Mickey Jagget announced that the district would renovate the cafeteria and create an outside courtyard for students during lunch. This month, Jagget released the plans and has faced backlash from some parents. In the remodel, Jagget included an area for outside fast food vendors like Pizza Hut or Taco Bell. The district has not secured contracts with the vendors yet, but it is in negotiations. Jagget is proposing that vendors rotate into the cafeteria on a monthly basis.

Students overwhelmingly approve of Jagget's plan. The Student Council even gave the superintendent a list of fast food places that students would love to have at school. After hearing complaints from parents, Jagget surveyed students in their English classes about the renovation. The survey showed 95% of the 1,095 students who completed the survey support the use of outside vendors.

The renovation will begin in early June and is scheduled to be completed before the 2022-2023 school year begins.

The president of the PTSA will hold a forum in the lecture hall at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 16, to discuss the new cafeteria plans. Several parents have expressed concerns about fast food being served during school hours. Jagget will attend the PTSA forum to answer questions and gather feedback.

You are writing for the issue of the *Press* to be distributed Monday, March 14.

## ■ MICKEY JAGGET, superintendent

"When we released the renovation plans, I did not expect backlash, and I have not received any from students. I understand that parents are concerned about outside vendors, but until two years ago, our students were allowed to leave campus for lunch. We stopped that after too many students were involved in car accidents. During that time though, I didn't have a single parent complain about allowing students to drive to fast food restaurants for lunch. Bringing the vendors to the students is a much safer option.

"I certainly will listen to the parent feedback at the PTSA forum, and I welcome it. We haven't signed any vendor contracts, and we haven't started any construction. There is time to revisit the plans, but I also will listen to our students. Our cafeteria should serve their wants and needs."

■ **CARLY WATTS, junior**

“Off-campus lunch ended my freshman year before I could drive. I have never able to leave campus for lunch. The new cafeteria plan is lit. If we can't leave campus for my senior year, then it would be great to be able to have good food in our own cafeteria. I don't mean to upset our cafeteria workers. They are the nicest ladies, but the food is not exactly great.”

■ **STEVIE TYLER, freshman**

“I love the new plan for the cafeteria. I can't wait to eat Taco Bell or Pizza Hut for lunch. I never pack my lunch, so I would love to have new choices. I can't understand why the parents are upset. No one is going to force any student to eat fast food for lunch. And really, what high school kid doesn't eat fast food every once in a while.”

■ **JOANIE PERRY, PTSA president and parent**

“I thought the school district was trying to create a healthier path for students. The district removed all soda machines, and the gardening club has been giving fresh herbs and vegetables to the cafeteria. Bringing in fast food vendors is the complete opposite. Students will flock to that food instead of the healthier options made by the cafeteria. I don't think the majority of parents approve of the renovation plan, and next week parents will have the opportunity to tell the superintendent. I encourage all parents to attend the meeting.”

■ **RICK JOURNEY, parent**

“My concern is about students who can't afford to buy the fast food. About 30% of our students qualify for free- or reduced-lunch. Those students won't be able to buy from the vendors. Once again, they will stand out and be different from their peers because of money.”

■ **VANNA HALEN, school cafeteria manager**

“Dr. Jagget shared the renovations plans with me a month ago. I support them. Adding a vendor like Pizza Hut actually helps us. It's hard to serve our students with only the cafeteria lines. Opening up another line and another source of food will be beneficial for everyone.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Five local fast food restaurants have expressed interest in selling food in the cafeteria.





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