

Feature Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2022



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School.

From the given information, write a **feature 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 **one hour**.

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, located in Texas, has 500 students enrolled in grades 9-12. During the pandemic when school and so many other things were shut down, freshman Jocelyn Tran found a new hobby through her favorite social media outlet — TikTok. The 125-pound, 5'4 student began powerlifting. She said she was inspired by several female TikTok fitness influencers who challenged viewers to “do” instead of “just watch.”

When she first started in the summer of 2020, Jocelyn was able to deadlift 100 pounds, bench press 30 pounds and squat 75 pounds. Today, she has more than doubled those numbers. Her personal best for deadlift is 250, for bench press it's 100 and for squats it's 200. Jocelyn works out four times a week with the powerlifting team and on the weekends at a local gym. Currently, she is the only female on the school's powerlifting team.

Last week, Jocelyn participated in a regional powerlifting meet and brought home three first place medals, which qualified her for the state competition in Austin on Saturday, April 2. Four male competitors on the team also will advance to the state competition, but Jocelyn is the only team member who will compete in all three contests.

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

■ JOCELYN TRAN, freshman

“At the beginning of the pandemic, I was spending five to six hours a day watching TikToks and sharing them with friends. It drove my mom crazy. She said I was wasting too much time on TikTok. Then I found Queen B's videos about powerlifting, and I was amazed at how she was able to lift such heavy weights. She's smaller than I am. At the end of her videos, Queen B challenges her viewers to give powerlifting a try. After watching her for a week or two, I finally decided to give it a try. I have two older brothers with tons of weights, so we kind of have our own mini-gym in the house.

“In the beginning, it was frustrating. I couldn't lift much, but Queen B's videos kept me motivated. As the weeks wore on, I was able to increase my weights, and I began to see a difference in my body. Everything was getting firmer and stronger.

“My brothers helped me a lot in the beginning, which was great except when they would make me laugh. They say my face gets all contorted when I lift, and it cracks them up. When they laugh, I laugh. It's really hard to lift when you are laughing.

“When I asked the powerlifting coach if I could join the team, I think I shocked him. He had never coached a girl in powerlifting. At the first practice, I shocked him even more. I lift more than several of the guys on the team.

“Powerlifting has done more for me than just building muscles. It's taught me that I can do anything I set my mind to. It's taught me discipline and pa-

■ JOCELYN TRAN, (cont.)

tiency. I know that if I miss practices, then I don't improve. I also know that I improve slowly. It takes time to increase strength.

"Those lessons have been great in the classroom, too. My grades have improved, and my attitude has improved. I am a much more positive person who no longer procrastinates until the last minute to study or do homework.

"I am not intimidated by being the only girl on the powerlifting team, but it would be nice to have other girls on the team. I'm trying to talk some of my friends into joining for next year.

"Winning three first place medals at the regional meet was awesome. I am nervous about the state meet. I've done my homework, and there are a few girls in the Dallas area who are lifting quite a bit more than I am. I'd like to win three first places again, but I am thrilled that I even qualified. I am only a freshman. I have three more years to compete. If I stay disciplined and patient, I know that I will bring those gold medals home eventually. It doesn't have to be this year."

■ FRANK IOTA, powerlifting coach

"Jocelyn is a heck of a competitor. She hasn't missed a single day of practice since joining the team, and she lifts on her own on the weekends. She's probably my most driven athlete, and she's strong — really strong. She lifts more than I can, and I've got about seven inches and 100 pounds on her.

"I'd love for more girls to join our team. With Jocelyn winning three golds at the regional meet, maybe others will join now."

■ BUCK SANDERS, senior and captain of the powerlifting team

"When coach said a girl wanted to join the team, I was a little wary, but then I met Jocelyn. She lifts more than I did my freshman year. She helps keep our team motivated with her drive and focus. I can't wait to see how she does at the state meet."

■ VINCE TRAN, Jocelyn's brother who graduated last year

"My brother, Jess, and I are Jocelyn's biggest fans. My parents own a restaurant and can't attend the meets, but we never miss. We call Jocelyn our 'Tiny Super Sister.' I never thought she would be able to lift 125 pounds. She's lifting double that now. We are incredibly proud of her, and we do our best not to make her laugh at the meets when she's competing."

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Powerlifting is not a UIL-sanctioned sport.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

INVITATIONAL B • 2022 FEATURE 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. Figure out what the story is about and its theme or focus. This story is about a student who started powerlifting during the pandemic and won three regional medals (and headed to state).

2. The lead of a feature story must grab the reader's attention. It does not have to be a certain length or include the 5Ws and H. It should set a scene and get the reader into the story. Although you have freedom to describe the scene as you think it might have existed, try to stay as close to the prompt as you can. Some judges will not want you to wander off the subject too much.

When the third gold medal was placed around her neck, freshman Jocelyn Tran knew that her mom's complaints about the time she spent on TikTok would soon stop. After all, watching TikTok fitness videos is what started her weight-lifting career and led her to earn the medals.

During the pandemic, Jocelyn, inspired by TikTok fitness influencer Queen B, began powerlifting.

“At the end of her videos, Queen B challenges her viewers to give powerlifting a try,” she said. “After watching her for a week or two, I finally decided to give it a try. I have two older brothers with tons of weights, so we kind of have our own mini-gym in the house.”

3. Once you get past the lead, make sure you include a nut graph. It tells the reader what the story is going to be about. Follow the nut graph with a direct quote and then go into the transition/quote formula.

nut graph

When school started, Jocelyn joined the school's powerlifting team, and last week, she competed in a regional powerlifting meet where she won three first place medals. On April 2, she will compete in the state competition.

direct quote

“I am nervous about the state meet,” she said. “I've done my homework, and there are a few girls in the Dallas area who are lifting quite a bit more than I am.”

4. After you get past the nut graph, the rest of the story can tell itself through the use of transition/quote formula.

Be sure you attribute after the quote or at least after the first sentence. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution (“Jocelyn said,” not “said Jocelyn”). Avoid stacking quotes. Try to avoid putting two or more quotes together without placing some kind of transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the action of the story and that the quote does not repeat information in the transition.

transition/story-telling

When Jocelyn began lifting in the summer of 2020, she was able to deadlift 100 pounds, bench press 30 pounds and squat 75 pounds.

direct quote

“In the beginning, it was frustrating,” Jocelyn said. “I couldn’t lift much, but Queen B’s videos kept me motivated.”

transition/story-telling

Despite the frustration, Jocelyn kept practicing. Today, she can deadlift 250 pounds, bench press 100 pounds and squat 200 pounds.

direct quote

“As the weeks wore on, I was able to increase my weights, and I began to see difference in my body,” Jocelyn said. “Everything was getting firmer and stronger.”

5. Always use third person. Don’t say “our student” or “our own Jocelyn.” Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say “She is an awesome girl.” These statements are personal opinions and should not be made in a feature story.

6. Always use the verb “said” as the verb of attribution. Don’t say “says,” “stated,” “feels” or any other synonym for “said.”

7. Finally, look for a strong quote to use as a closing statement or a statement that will bring the reader back to the beginning of the story. It should give the reader a sense of satisfaction or resolution.

Jocelyn’s goal is to win three gold medals again at the state meet, but she said she’s “thrilled” that she even qualified.

“I have three more years to compete,” Jocelyn said. “If I stay disciplined and patient, I know that I will bring those gold medals home eventually. It doesn’t have to be this year.”

SAMPLE STORY

When the third gold medal was placed around her neck, freshman Jocelyn Tran knew that her mom's complaints about the time she spent on TikTok would soon stop. After all, watching TikTok fitness videos is what started her weight-lifting career and led her to earn the medals.

During the pandemic, Jocelyn, inspired by TikTok fitness influencer Queen B, began powerlifting.

"At the end of her videos, Queen B challenges her viewers to give powerlifting a try," she said. "After watching her for a week or two, I finally decided to give it a try. I have two older brothers with tons of weights, so we kind of have our own mini-gym in the house."

When school started, Jocelyn joined the school's powerlifting team, and last week, she competed in a regional powerlifting meet where she won three first place medals. On April 2, she will compete in the state competition.

"I am nervous about the state meet," she said. "I've done my homework, and there are a few girls in the Dallas area who are lifting quite a bit more than I am."

When Jocelyn began lifting in the summer of 2020, she was able to deadlift 100 pounds, bench press 30 pounds and squat 75 pounds.

"In the beginning, it was frustrating," Jocelyn said. "I couldn't lift much, but Queen B's videos kept me motivated."

Despite the frustration, Jocelyn kept practicing. Today, she can deadlift 250 pounds, bench press 100 pounds and squat 200 pounds.

"As the weeks wore on, I was able to increase my weights, and I began to see a difference in my body," Jocelyn said. "Everything was getting firmer and stronger."

Jocelyn is the only female on the powerlifting team and the only female powerlifter coach Frank Iota has ever worked with.

"Jocelyn is a heck of a competitor," Iota said. "She's probably my most driven athlete, and she's strong — really strong. She lifts more than I can, and I've got about seven inches and 100 pounds on her."

Jocelyn said powerlifting has done more for her than just build muscles.

"It's taught me that I can do anything I set my mind to," Jocelyn said. "It's taught me discipline and patience. My grades have improved, and my attitude has improved. I am a much more positive person who no longer procrastinates until the last minute to study or do homework."

Jocelyn's goal is to win three gold medals again at the state meet, but she said she's "thrilled" that she even qualified.

"I have three more years to compete," Jocelyn said. "If I stay disciplined and patient, I know that I will bring those gold medals home eventually. It doesn't have to be this year."