

# Feature Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2019



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 an enrollment of 1,100 students in grades 9-12. This year, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Club decided to participate in the Suncar Competition. For the contest, the students must design, build and race a road-worthy solar car. In July, the team will travel to Dallas to compete in a 300-mile race across Texas in the solar car they built. Seventy teams have entered the competition.

The seven-student team spent much of August and September designing the car and gathering the necessary parts. For the past six months, the students have worked on building the actual car. Working after school and on the weekends, the students built the car in the school's old garage, which used to serve as the auto mechanics classroom in the 1990s. Now, the garage is used for storage.

In early March, the students finished building the car and painted it neon green to match the team's neon green team shirts. Now, the students are ready for their first test drive. At noon on Saturday, March 23, the team will debut the car and take it on its first spin around the school and town. To hype up the event, the athletic booster club agreed to serve barbecue, and the school drum line will perform. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Thursday, March 21.

## ■ MIGUEL SANTOS, junior and president of the STEM Club

"Matt [Rentierro] and I heard about the competition last year from Mr. [Bert] Trowman. It sounded like a cool contest, so we started looking at the possibility of building a solar car with our club. Since everyone was interested, we thought we would give it a shot.

"Matt and I designed the car, with some help from Mr. Trowman and my dad. My dad is a mechanic and understands engines, and Mr. Trowman is an engineer and understands design. We call it 'The Green Machine.' The six solar panels on it are black, but everything else is neon green — even the steering wheel and seat. My mom made us neon green team shirts with our team name, Lightspeed, for us to wear on Saturday.

"The club really got into building the car. I can't tell you how many times we worked until 10 at night and not even realized the time. The garage has no air-conditioning or heat. In the fall, it was hot. Really hot. In the winter, it was cold. Really cold. Luckily, we had a few portable fans and heaters, so we didn't sweat or freeze to death. This was definitely a labor of love for our club.

"In late February, we started the car for the first time. That was crazy exciting. The entire club broke into cheers. We have driven it around the school at night when no one is around to make sure that it runs.

"We have a shot at winning this contest. Our car's top speed is faster than last year's first place winner. Our big obstacle will be if the car can maintain that speed for the entire race."

### ■ **MATT RENTIERRO, junior and club vice president**

“I’m stoked about Saturday. The inaugural drive will take us about 15 minutes. We want to drive through town and around the school. After the drive, we will break out the barbecue and music to celebrate. We are not completely finished with the car, but we wanted to share our success so far with the town. We’ve tried to keep this project pretty top secret. Even our parents have never seen the car. Saturday will be our big unveiling.

“Our goal is to have the car perfected by May to be ready for the contest in July. A team of four of us will take the car to Dallas on the back of a tow truck. If the car passes all of the inspections and gets accepted into the contest, the four of us will take turns driving it in the race. Miguel’s dad will take the three who are not driving and follow in his van.”

### ■ **BERT TROWMAN, technology director**

“The STEM Club has outdone itself. When I first approached the guys about the competition last year, I thought it was a good idea but wasn’t sure they would follow through. Boy, was I wrong. Miguel and Matt had a solid plan and design by September. It blew my mind. Some schools take three to four years to design, build and compete in this contest. It is not unusual for students who have graduated to be part of a team because it took the team so long to finish. Not our club. Those students worked late nights and every other weekend. My wife joked that I should start bringing clothes to school and shower in the locker room because I was getting home so late.

“I am incredibly proud of the team. They have gone beyond all my expectations. The car still needs a few tweaks and fixes, but it’s ready for its debut. I hope a lot of students and community come out and support them. This is a big deal.”

### ■ **MARTY SANTOS, Miguel’s father**

“I have no doubt that the team’s car will pass the contest inspection and get to race. As far I can see, the car has no flaws and has a good chance of winning the race. I would love to tell you more about the car, but I’ve been sworn to secrecy. I tried to video the boys the first night they took the car for a spin around the school, but I was shut down. My wife wanted to see the car, but the boys would have none of that. They didn’t even drive it around the school until after 9 p.m. Everyone is going to be surprised on Saturday. The car does not look like it was designed by a few high school kids in just a few months.”

### ■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The top three team in the Suncar Competition will win \$10,000, \$7,500 and \$5,000 respectively.

**DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!**

## INVITATIONAL B • 2019

### 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 club making a solar car for a competition.

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 copy as you can. Some judges will not want you to wander off the subject too much.

Neon green exterior. Neon green steering wheel. Neon green seats. The car, dubbed "The Green Machine," even runs green.

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**

And this Saturday, students and the community will get a chance to see this green-mobile in action when the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Club members debut the car and take it for a test drive in preparation for the Suncar Competition this summer.

#### **direct quote**

"After the drive, we will break out the barbecue and music to celebrate," junior and club vice president Matt Rentierro said.

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 ("Rentierro said," not "said Rentierro"). 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**

The STEM Club built the solar-powered car for the Suncar Competition, which will be held in Dallas in July. For the contest, the club had to design and build a road-worthy solar car that could compete in a 300-mile race across Texas.

**direct quote**

“We are not completely finished with the car, but we wanted to share our success so far with the town,” Rentierro said.

**transition/story-telling**

After the 15-minute test drive, the athletic booster club will serve barbecue and the school drum line will perform to celebrate the STEM club’s Green Machine. The STEM club decided to participate in the competition last year after learning about the contest from technology director Bert Trowman.

**direct quote**

“The car still needs a few tweaks and fixes, but it’s ready for its debut,” Trowman said. “I hope a lot of students and community come out and support them. This is a big deal.”

5. Always use third person. Don’t say “our teacher” or “our own Mr. Trowman.” Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say “They are so wonderful.” 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.

Miguel’s father Marty Santos, who will be with the team in Dallas and follow the race in his van, said he has no doubts about the car passing inspection.

“As far I can see, the car has no flaws and has a good chance of winning the race,” he said. “The car does not look like it was designed by a few high school kids in just a few months.”

**SAMPLE STORY**

Neon green exterior. Neon green steering wheel. Neon green seats. The car, dubbed “The Green Machine,” even runs green.

And this Saturday, students and the community will get a chance to see this green-mobile in action when the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Club members debut the car and take it for a test drive in preparation for the Suncar Competition this summer.

“After the drive, we will break out the barbecue and music to celebrate,” junior and club vice president Matt Rentierro said.

The STEM Club built the solar-powered car for the Suncar Competition, which will be held in Dallas in July. For the contest, the club had to design and build a road-worthy solar car that could compete in a 300-mile race across Texas.

“We are not completely finished with the car, but we wanted to share our success so far with the town,” Rentierro said.

After the 15-minute test drive, the athletic booster club will serve barbecue and the school drum line will perform to celebrate the STEM club’s Green Machine. The STEM club decided to participate in the competition last year after learning about the contest from technology director Bert Trowman.

“The car still needs a few tweaks and fixes, but it’s ready for its debut,” Trowman said. “I hope a lot of students and community come out and support them. This is a big deal.”

In July, four members will travel to Dallas for the car’s inspection and for the 300-mile race. The top three teams out of 70 will take home \$10,000, \$7,500 and \$5,000 respectively.

“We have a shot at winning this contest,” said Miguel Santos, junior and president of the club. “Our car’s top speed is faster than last year’s first place winner. Our big obstacle will be if the car can maintain that speed for the entire race.”

The team of seven students worked many weekends and late nights to build the car.

“I can’t tell you how many times we’ve worked until 10 at night and not even realized the time,” Santos said. “This was definitely a labor of love for our club.”

Rentierro said the team has kept the process of building the car “top secret.”

“Even our parents have never seen the car,” Rentierro said. “Saturday will be our big unveiling.”

The team’s goal is to have the car perfected in May to be ready for the contest in July.

“A team of four of us will take the car to Dallas on the back of a tow truck,” Rentierro said. “If the car passes all of the inspections and gets accepted into the contest, the four of us will take turns driving it in the race.”

Miguel’s father Marty Santos, who will be with the team in Dallas and follow the race in his van, said he has no doubts about the car passing inspection.

“As far I can see, the car has no flaws and has a good chance of winning the race,” he said. “The car does not look like it was designed by a few high school kids in just a few months.”



**Yippee!! You're the director of the journalism contests. To make your life a little easier...**

**WE HAVE ENCLOSED:**

- The contests
- Judging criteria
- A statement to the judges
- A statement to the contestants
- Contest Tips. (Provides examples of how stories/heads should have been written and a sample story. Clip a copy to each entry to provide immediate feedback.)

**NOW, YOU NEED TO:**

- Make certain you have read the journalism section of the *UIL Journalism Handbook*. You can download it free from the UIL website at: [http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism\\_Handbook\\_2018-19.pdf](http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism_Handbook_2018-19.pdf).
- Inventory the contest packet. Hopefully, there won't be any problems. If you find one, please call it to my attention. Call me at work at 512/232-4924, home at 512/740-3463 or e-mail me at [jacton@uiltexas.org](mailto:jacton@uiltexas.org).
- **READ THE ENCLOSED STATEMENT TO YOUR JUDGES.**  
Discuss the judging criteria and clarifications with the judges.
- **Do not give the tips to students.**
- Share the "Tips" with the judges (**BEFORE** they judge) and clip one copy to each contestant's entry **AFTER JUDGING**. Judges should write directly on EVERY student's entry and then attach one copy of the Contest Tips to each entry.
- Thanks and good luck!

# Statement to Judges

## JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

***Please copy and distribute the following statement to the judges***

1. Divide papers among the judges.
2. Every paper **MUST** be read and edited by at least one judge. *No paper should EVER be returned without written comments.*
3. Every judge does not have to read every paper. Strive for two readings for each paper. A third reading may be necessary for papers that contend for placing in the top six.
4. Avoid sarcasm or unduly harsh criticism. Remember: these are high school students, not professionals.
5. Please review the “Tips” for each contest. This sheet is consistent with the contest manual and what has been taught at conferences.
6. Realize that the UIL style may differ slightly from what you have been taught, what you practice or your newspaper’s style. If you have serious disagreement, please take them up with the UIL office, not the contestants or the meet director. For example, in the news, feature and editorial writing contests, it is not necessary to identify the school, Leaguetown High School. We create this contest as if students attend Leaguetown High School. Therefore, we assume high school students know the name of their school. Also, since AP style constantly changes, watch simply for writers to follow a consistent style. Some students (and newspapers) prefer addressing people with Mr./Mrs./Ms. title on second and subsequent uses.
7. In the Feature Writing contest, students have the freedom to develop scenes as they feel the scenes *may* have existed. The scenes must be a natural extension of the story. Please read “Contest tips” before judging.
8. In the editorial writing contest, students have the freedom to propose solutions or suggest answers they feel might resolve the problem. They do not have to be those proposed on the fact sheet. Also, they are urged to write in third person, but they may use first person plural on occasion.
9. In the headline writing contest: the main deck of a main/secondary headline combination may contain but does not need a verb. For example:

## Out of Air



# Statement to the Contestants

## JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

*Please read the following statement to contestants*

1. Place your number in the upper right hand corner of each page of your entry. Do not put your name or your school's name on any part of the contest entry. If you do, you may be disqualified.
2. Write on one side of the paper only. Write legibly. This is a request, not a requirement.
3. It is suggested that you double space so judges may edit and write comments more extensively on your entry. This is a request, not a requirement.
4. You may use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus (bound or electronic) during News, Editorial, Feature and Headline contest. You may also use an AP stylebook. You may not use a journalism text or other textbook. No resources are allowed during the Copy Editing contest.
5. You may not talk during the contest. If you have a question, raise your hand and the contest monitor will come to you.
6. If you use a computer, you are responsible should it malfunction. You will have the remaining time to complete the contest in longhand, but you will not be given extra time. You must complete the print command before the monitor asks everyone to quit writing. If the computer malfunctions do not make noise trying to fix it. The monitor will ask you to leave if you are causing too much commotion. You may not use a computer in the Headline Writing contest or the Copy Editing contest.
7. Make sure all of your electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, etc.) are turned off. You may be disqualified for disrupting the contest if your devices go off.
8. When you are finished, please turn in your paper and quietly exit.

Good luck.





## **JUDGING CRITERIA**

### **SPRING MEET JOURNALISM CONTESTS**

In an effort to standardize judging procedures statewide, the League office has compiled a list of journalism contest judging guidelines. This list of guidelines will be included in each district and regional contest packet and will be available to State Meet contest judges. It is the responsibility of each journalism contest director to see that all contest judges are familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.

#### **■ HEADLINE WRITING (30 minutes) NEW TIME FOR 2019!**

1. Within count. **Note:** All letters, digits, punctuation marks, spaces, grammatical marks count as one (1).
2. Wording specific, accurate; unnecessary wording omitted.
3. Verb needed in main, secondary or both decks. At times, though, a verb is not necessary in both the main and secondary head.
4. Emphasis on active verbs.
5. Past tense avoided.
6. Split phrases (modifiers, verbs) avoided.
7. Redundancy in wording avoided.
8. Does not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
9. Main headlines not dependent on secondary headlines.
10. Secondary headlines emphasize significant aspect of news.
11. Grammar, spelling, punctuation correct.
  - A. It is permissible to use upstyle (ALL CAPS) or downstyle headlines.
  - B. Students need not complete all six headlines to win. It is possible that five good headlines will win over six mediocre ones, or four excellent heads will win over six poor headlines. The final decision rests with the judges, but no contestants shall be disqualified solely on the basis of not completing all six headlines.

#### **■ EDITORIAL WRITING (45 minutes)**

1. Introduction presents problem, provides staff stance.
2. Lead grabs reader's attention.
3. Evidence provided to support stance taken.
4. Direct quotes avoided unless absolutely necessary.
5. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
6. Other viewpoints presented and evidence is shown to refute those viewpoints.
7. Conclusion recaps staff position and contains call to action and/or solution.
8. Third person emphasized, although first person plural may be used occasionally.
9. Editorial tone fair, mature.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ FEATURE WRITING (60 minutes)

1. Lead grabs reader's attention and fits mood of story. It is permissible for students to set a scene for the feature prompt. The scene may include details that are not in the prompt.
2. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
3. Slang, cliches, jargon avoided.
4. Facts presented in logical sequence.
5. Smooth transitions.
6. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
7. Persons identified fully, accurately.
8. Feature theme fully developed.
9. Utilizes time peg (if necessary)
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ NEWS WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Sound news judgment in lead selection.
2. Facts presented in descending order of importance.
3. Information flows. Smooth transitions.
4. People identified fully, accurately.
5. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
6. Extraneous information omitted; writing tight.
7. Wording active.
8. All news questions answered. Newspaper style incorporated.
9. Editorialization avoided.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ STYLE/TITLES

- ✓ Newspaper style includes the option of using titles of Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. with names of adults. Students should be identified fully at first mention and by last name thereafter (1st use - senior Jeanne Acton; second and subsequent uses - Acton or Ms. Acton). It is permissible to use first names only on the second reference in feature stories. AP style calls for adults to be identified by full name at first mention, and then with appropriate title and last name thereafter. Be aware of deviations from AP style. If a contestant is consistent in the use of their style, it is not recommended you penalize the contestant for not following strict AP style. We ask that you look for consistency and understandability in the use of a contestant's style.

## ■ SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Journalistic proficiency shall be the standard by which entries are judged. In papers of similar journalistic quality, secondary considerations of grammar, spelling and neatness may be used to determine contest results. The contest does not intend, however, to test grammar or spelling skills, and each entry should be judged on its journalistic merit before other considerations come into play.

## ■ COPY EDITING (15 minutes) NEW CONTEST FOR 2019

- ✓ A key to the Copy Editing Contest will be included with your material. Part III is graded only to break ties.