

Feature Writing

Region 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 NOT YOUR NAME on your paper.

Leaguetown High School, located in East Texas, has an enrollment of 650 students in grades 9-12. In November, art teacher Corie Booker gave her Art II class two weeks to create artwork on a white Converse tennis shoe that shows off teen culture or the town's culture. For the project, the students could work in pairs or by themselves. Junior Julia Castro paired with sophomore Andi Yang, who has Down Syndrome. The two designed a shoe decorated with different colored roses to showcase the signature flower of East Texas. The finished shoe looked as if the pair used watercolors to create their roses, but they used Sharpie markers and rubbing alcohol.

Julia and Andi have been friends since elementary school. Andi communicates only through sign language. One of Julia's parents is deaf, so she can communicate easily with Andi.

The rose shoe was voted Best Design for the class, and the girls began selling their one-of-a-kind shoes last month. The shoes sell for \$60. So far, the girls have sold 25 pairs and made a \$500 profit. They also made a pair for themselves. The girls plan to donate their profits to the East Texas Special Olympics team and will present their \$500 check to the organization at the opening ceremony of the 2019 Special Olympic Spring Games competition Saturday, April 20, at Tyler Junior College.

You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed on Friday, April 19.

■ CORIE BOOKER, art teacher

"I came up with the idea for the assignment from a friend who decorated a pair of white canvas tennis shoes for her wedding. I thought it was a fun idea that my students would embrace, and they did. We had everything from Dallas Rangers-themed shoes to Lady Gaga-themed shoes. Julia and Andi created a stunning pair of shoes. When I first saw their shoe, I thought they had used watercolors. The multi-colored roses almost bleed into each other. It didn't surprise me that their shoe displayed flowers. That's Andi's favorite thing to draw — all types of flowers.

"I love the relationship Andi and Julia have. They are inseparable in my class. It's great that they are selling their shoes now. It happened so organically. Some of the girls in my Art I class saw the shoes and begged me to ask Julia and Andi to make a pair for them. I did, and now they have created a booming business. Each pair of shoes is unique, but they all have the roses theme. I was the second person to buy a pair, and every time I wear them around my friends, I get loads of compliments. In fact, two of my friends also have a pair."

■ JULIA CASTRO, junior

“Andi and I were excited when our shoe won Best Design. We really liked our shoes, but we weren’t sure if other students in the class would. We didn’t focus on teen culture like most did.

“Andi and I have been friends since I was 6 and she was 5. That’s when she moved in next door. We became instant friends. My mom is deaf, and I grew up signing. Andi is the sweetest soul in the world, and when Ms. Booker assigned this project, Andi asked if I would be her partner. I jumped at the chance to work with her. She is an amazing artist — especially with flowers. For the first pair of shoes, Andi did most of the initial drawing, and I did most of the coloring with a lot of direction from Andi. After the flowers were drawn and colored, we used rubbing alcohol to soften and blend the flowers and colors. The shoe turned out better than we expected.

“We didn’t expect to make more shoes and sell them, but when Ms. Booker told us that students were interested, we thought, ‘Why not?’ It takes us about two hours to complete a pair of rose shoes.

“After our first sale, we decided any profits we made would go to the Special Olympics. Andi participates in several sports for the Special Olympics, and I volunteer several times a year. It’s a great organization. We plan to keep making the shoes and donating our profits to the Special Olympics.

“Some people think it’s weird how close we are, but I don’t. Andi and I do all of the normal teen stuff. We talk about boys. Andi is totally boy crazy. We watch movies together. We both love comedies. We hang out. She’s my best friend. I don’t have siblings, so I tell everyone that Andi is my little sister. That always makes her giggle. She’s an only child, too. While Andi loves to laugh and be silly, she is super-serious when it comes to her artwork. The idea for the shoe was hers, and she is the workhorse in our partnership. When I want to mess around, she demands we work. She is totally focused.”

■ ANDI YANG, sophomore

“I love drawing roses, and I love our shoes. Julia and I wear our shoes almost every day. This spring, I will play tennis for the Special Olympics. My partner’s name is Rudy. He goes to Southside High School.”

■ ROSEANNE YANG, Andi’s mom

“Andi is the happiest, most positive person I know, and she is so fortunate to have Julia as her friend. The two spend so much time together laughing and watching movies and silly videos. They are together all of the time. In fact, it was Andi who convinced Julia to take art two years ago. When I learned the girls were going to sell the shoes, I immediately put in my order. Every time I wear the shoes, people ask me where I got them. I point to Andi, and she just blushes.

“Special Olympics has been a part of Andi’s life since she was 4 years old. Andi says it one of her three favorite things in life, right up there with Julia and drawing. She’s participated in many events, but tennis and bowling are her favorite sports.”

■ KRIS GILLIBRAND, Director of the East Texas Special Olympics

“When Ms. Yang contacted me about the donation, I was thrilled that the money was raised by one of our own competitors. Andi is a fierce competitor, so it doesn’t surprise me that she won the Best Design for her shoes. I’ve heard so much about the shoes. I can’t wait to see a pair. Andi told me she was going to wear hers when she plays her tennis matches next week.”

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING CONTEST!

REGION • 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 special friendship between two students and their artwork.

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.

Junior Julia Castro and sophomore Andi Lang are best friends — it's as simple as that.

Or at least to Julia it is.

"Some people think it's weird how close we are, but I don't," Julia said. "Andi and I do all of the normal teen stuff. We talk about boys. Andi is totally boy crazy. We watch movies together. We both love comedies. We hang out."

The two are inseparable — especially in art class. So it's not surprising that when they were able to pair for an art project, they did. The girls worked together on their tennis shoe assignment — create artwork on a canvas tennis shoe that displays teen culture or the town's culture.

The lead possibilities are endless.

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

Using colored Sharpies and rubbing alcohol, the two created a shoe covered in roses. The shoe won Best Design for the class, and now the girls are selling their one-of-a-kind shoes for \$60. They have sold 25 pairs so far and made a \$500 profit, which they will donate to the East Texas Special Olympics tomorrow at its opening spring games at Tyler Junior College.

direct quote

"Special Olympics has been a part of Andi's life since she was 4 years old," Roseanne Yang, Andi's mother, said. "Andi says it one of her three favorite things in life, right up there with Julia and drawing."

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

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 (“Julia said,” not “said Julia”). Don’t stack quotes. You need a transition sentence between direct quotes, and that transition sentence should provide facts or data. Also, make sure transitions do not repeat information told in a direct quote.

transition/story-telling

Andi, who has Down Syndrome and communicates only with sign language, met Julia when she was 5 years old.

direct quote

“That’s when she moved in next door,” Julia said. “Andi didn’t know many people who were her age and who knew sign language, so we became instant friends. My mom is deaf, and I grew up signing.”

transition/story-telling

Julia describes Andi as “the sweetest soul in the world” and as “an amazing artist,” especially with flowers. Andi was the one who convinced Julia to take art two years ago.

direct quote

“When Ms. Booker assigned this project, Andi asked if I would be her partner,” Julia said. “I jumped at the chance to work with her.”

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

6. Use the verb “said” as the verb of attribution unless you have a very good reason not to. For example, if someone asks something, use the verb “asked.” If someone added something, you could use “added.” Otherwise, use “said.”

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

In fact, Andi will show off her shoes this weekend when she donates the profits and when she competes in the team tennis event at the Special Olympics Spring Games.

“When Ms. Yang contacted me about the donation, I was thrilled that the money was raised by one of our own competitors,” said Kris Gillibrand, director of the East Texas Special Olympics. “Andi is a fierce competitor, so it doesn’t surprise me that she won the Best Design for her shoes. I’ve heard so much about the shoes. I can’t wait to see a pair.”

SAMPLE STORY

Junior Julia Castro and sophomore Andi Lang are best friends. It's as simple as that. Or at least to Julia it is.

"Some people think it's weird how close we are, but I don't," Julia said. "Andi and I do all of the normal teen stuff. We talk about boys. Andi is totally boy crazy. We watch movies together. We both love comedies. We hang out."

The two are inseparable — especially in art class. So it's not surprising that when they were able to pair for an art project, they did. The girls worked together on their tennis shoe assignment, which had them create artwork displaying teen culture or the town's culture on a pair of white Converse shoes.

Using colored Sharpies and rubbing alcohol, the two created a shoe covered in roses. The shoe won Best Design for the class, and now the girls are selling their one-of-a-kind shoes for \$60. They have sold 25 pairs so far and made a \$500 profit, which they will donate to the East Texas Special Olympics tomorrow at its opening spring games at Tyler Junior College.

"Special Olympics has been a part of Andi's life since she was 4 years old," Roseanne Yang, Andi's mother, said. "Andi says it one of her three favorite things in life, right up there with Julia and drawing."

Andi, who has Down Syndrome and communicates only with sign language, met Julia when she was 5 years old.

"That's when she moved in next door," Julia said. "Andi didn't know many people who were her age and who knew sign language, so we became instant friends. My mom is deaf, and I grew up signing."

Julia describes Andi as "the sweetest soul in the world" and as "an amazing artist" — especially with flowers. Andi was the one who convinced Julia to take art two years ago.

"When Ms. Booker assigned this project, Andi asked if I would be her partner," Julia said. "I jumped at the chance to work with her."

The idea for the artwork on the shoes was Andi's, and she drew most of the roses, Julia said.

"I did most of the coloring with a lot of direction from Andi," Julia said. "After the flowers were drawn and colored, we used rubbing alcohol to soften and blend the flowers and colors. The shoe turned out better than we expected."

Competing against Dallas Ranger and Lady Gaga shoes, Julia said she wasn't sure the class would like their rose shoes.

"We didn't focus on teen culture like most did," she said.

But their shoes won the class over, and their popularity grew quickly.

"Some the girls in my Art I class saw the shoes and begged me to ask Julia and Andi to make a pair for them," art teacher Corie Booker said. "I did, and now they have created a booming business. Each pair of shoes is unique, but they all have the roses theme. I was the second person to buy a pair, and every time I wear them around my friends, I get loads of compliments. In fact, two of my friends also have a pair."

The shoes are stunning, Booker says.

"When I first saw the finished shoe, I thought they had used watercolors," she said. "The multi-colored roses almost bleed into each other. It didn't surprise me that their shoe displayed flowers. That's Andi's favorite thing to draw — all types of flowers."

It takes the girls, who made shoes for themselves, about two hours to complete a pair of their rose shoes.

"I love drawing roses, and I love our shoes," Andi said. "Julia and I wear our shoes almost every day."

In fact, Andi will show off her shoes this weekend when she donates the profits and when she competes in the team tennis event at the Special Olympics Spring Games.

"When Ms. Yang contacted me about the donation, I was thrilled that the money was raised by one of our own competitors," said Kris Gillibrand, director of the East Texas Special Olympics. "Andi is a fierce competitor, so it doesn't surprise me that she won the Best Design for her shoes. I've heard so much about the shoes. I can't wait to see a pair."



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.
- 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.
- **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.