

Headline Writing

Invitational Meet A • 2021



You are a copy editor for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of League-town High School.

Write the headline assigned for each of the given six stories. Use the following system: all upper and lower case letters, spaces, punctuation marks and symbols count as 1. Capitalize the first letter of the first word of each headline. You may use either upstyle (capitalizing the first letter of every word) or downstyle (capitalizing the first letter of the first word and the first letter of proper nouns only thereafter). Remember that main headlines belong on the top line and secondary headlines belong under the main headline. You have **30 minutes**.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry.

Story 1 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-24

The National Honor Society will provide free babysitting for teachers during their staff development days Feb. 15-16.

“One of our members overheard her teacher talking about how tough professional development days are because her young children don’t have school,” NHS president Anna Victor said. “It makes sense for NHS members to help.”

Teachers can sign up for the babysitting until next Friday in NHS sponsor Macey Robinette’s classroom.

“We are planning different games and activities for various age groups,” Victor said. “If the weather is nice, we also will take them to League Park for a picnic and playtime on the playground.”

Victor said at least five NHS members are CPR certified.

“A lot of members have experience in babysitting, so teachers should feel comfortable leaving their kids with us,” she said.

Story 2 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-18

The Feminist Club will hold a feminine product and toiletry drive for homeless women during the last week of February.

“I volunteer at the homeless shelter with my mom, and feminine products are always in short supply for the women at the shelter,” senior Addison Nguyen said. “People don’t think about donating those items.”

Students and staff can drop off donations in the front office or in a bin outside of English teacher Nicole Lugio’s classroom.

“Our goal is to get more than 200 items donated,” Nguyen said. “If people feel weird bringing feminine products to school, then they can donate other toiletry items like shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes.”

Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-26

During the FFA’s week of service this year, the group worked with the residents at League Home to build and plant a vegetable garden for the facility. The garden contains 15 vegetables ranging from tomatoes to squash.

“We hope the residents will be able to harvest the vegetables in the late spring and summer for their own dinners,” junior Neal Spense said.

League Home is a residential facility for adults with developmental disabilities.

“Our residents had a blast planting the garden with the FFA students,” Nan Smith, League Home director, said. “The students even developed a work schedule for the residents — who waters and when, who weeds and when and other chores to keep the garden healthy.”

Spense said he suggested the garden because his uncle lives at the facility.

“I spend a lot of time there visiting with my uncle, who has Down Syndrome,” he said. “It’s a great place, and I thought the residents would really enjoy having a garden.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 22-28

Every Thursday morning without fail, Principal Hunter Zama gets up before the sun rises to make his family pancakes.

“It’s a tradition my father did with me, and, luckily, my boys are just like me and love pancakes, too,” Zama said.

On National Pancake Day on March 4, Zama will bring his passion for pancakes and his Thursday morning tradition to school. He and his administrative team will host a pancake breakfast from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. for students and staff.

“We will have 10 cooks going at the same time,” he said. “We are prepared to serve every single student and staff member in the school.”

Junior Deonna Brown said she will arrive at school early to indulge in the sweet treats.

“This is so sweet,” Brown said. “I rarely get breakfast at my house. We are all too busy. I definitely will come to school early for pancakes.”

Zama said Grant Market is donating the ingredients for the breakfast.

“We are making my famous buttermilk pancakes, but we will have all kinds of toppings from fruit to whipped cream,” he said. “We also will have gluten-free and dairy-free options for people who need that.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-20 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

When junior Tess Brooks met her dog Buddy, it was love at first sight.

Despite his chubby body, short legs and scraggly hair, she immediately fell for the multi-colored mutt.

“He was so ugly that he was cute,” she said.

And apparently, Tess isn’t the only one who thinks her dog is cute.

Last week, Buddy won the Mutt Beauty Pageant held at League Park and sponsored by the Leaguetown Humane Society.

“It was his personality that won over the judges,” Tess said. “He’s never met a human that he didn’t love.”

In addition to his medal and bucket of dog treats, Buddy also won a grooming session at Pete’s Pet Shop and a photo shoot with a local photographer.

“He’s the star of the family now,” she said. “My parents are treating him like royalty. They bought him a new bed and a new collar.”

Story 6 — Write: 1-line headline counting 26-32

After serving the district for 12 years, Superintendent Jeremy Gayton announced he will retire at the end of the school year to spend more time with his wife who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer.

“I will miss everything about my job,” he said, “but it’s time for me to focus on my family.”

Gayton said the doctors have given his wife, Gail, a good prognosis.

“We truly believe she will beat the cancer,” Gayton said. “We caught it early. But her diagnosis was a wake-up call for me.”

The couple plans to travel once the cancer treatment is over.

“When we got married 30 years ago, I promised my wife that I would take her to Scotland, England and Ireland one day,” Gayton said.

Because of school district obligations, Gayton said he couldn’t keep that promise during his time as superintendent.

“I always had a board meeting, football game or academic event to attend,” he said. “I am not complaining about being superintendent of Leaguetown. I’ve loved every minute of it. But it’s time for me to hand over the reins to someone new.”

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

INVITATIONAL A • 2021 HEADLINE WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLES

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 judges.

1. Headline writing is different than the other contests. It is suggested you pace yourself. You have about 5 minutes for each headline. Don't watch the clock, but be aware of the time you are taking to complete a headline. It is better to have four or five good headlines rather than six mediocre ones.
2. When writing the headline, first highlight or underline all the important words in the story. Then write a sentence based on those highlighted words.
3. After you have your first sentence, go back and begin editing out words. If you have a multi-line headline, separate the lines at a recommended area. This means you should not split phrases or ideas. Make sure all types of phrases — noun, verb, adverbial, adjective and prepositional phrases especially — are on the same line. Continue eliminating words until you get to a point where the headline fits. It may be necessary to re-write the headline one or more times or to take a different approach before you get the key idea. Remember to eliminate all unnecessary words such as article adjectives (a, an, the). In many cases a comma (,) can substitute for the word "and."
4. You may use a thesaurus or dictionary, either bound or electronic. You may write in block letters. You should not be penalized for inconsistency in upstyle or downstyle.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Under no circumstances should you go over the maximum count. Judges are instructed to disqualify any headline under or over the prescribed count.
6. Write headlines using active verbs in either present, future or present perfect tense. Follow the style of the headline — if it is a fun story, write a fun headline; if it is a serious story, write a serious headline.
7. Do not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
8. Normally, the main headline is used to grab the reader's attention. It is not necessary, although it is possible, to have a verb in the main headline when you have a secondary headline. The secondary headline should do one of two things: emphasize the significant aspects of the story or emphasize the unusual.
9. Please note that AP does not have a style dealing with headlines. Most newspapers create their own style; so using numbers or spelling them out is acceptable either way as long as the writer is consistent.

The following are additional basic headline rules for you to follow:

- avoid starting the headline with a verb
- always use single quotes
- avoid using the same word twice in a headline
- use active verbs, not passive verbs
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations
- do not end the headline with a period

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**Invitational A Meet • 2021
Headline Writing Entry Sheet**

All letters (upper and lower case), numbers, punctuation marks, symbols and spaces count as one (1). Place one letter or other unit in the appropriate spaces below. Remember to leave spaces between words. Note that the number of lines you are given on this sheet corresponds to the number of lines required for each headline. **Write your number on the upper right-hand corner of this sheet.**

■ Headline Number 1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

■ Headline Number 2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

■ Headline Number 3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

■ **Headline Number 4**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

main headline

secondary headline

■ **Headline Number 5**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

main headline

secondary headline

■ **Headline Number 6**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
