

# Headline Writing

Invitational Meet A • 2022



You are a copy editor for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown 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

For 25 years, the football stadium has been called Leaguetown Stadium. Tonight that changes. The school board voted unanimously to name the stadium after longtime football coach and athletic director Harold Gully.

Gully will retire in May after working for the school district for 33 years.

“When our board was presented with this idea, it was a simple decision,” board president Willis Butters said. “Coach Gully is a legend in this district. He’s won more games than any other 3A coach in Texas history.”

Gully said he had no idea the board was considering this proposal.

“My wife told me that I needed to go to the school board meeting,” he said. “I wasn’t excited to attend, but I always listen to my wife.”

When Mr. Butters suggested the change, Gully said he was speechless.

“It has been my honor to work in Leaguetown all my life,” he said. “That was reward enough. And now, to have the stadium named after me — I just don’t have any words to express my gratitude and surprise.”

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

The PTSA will move the Valentine’s Day dance from Friday, Feb. 11, to Saturday, Feb. 12, due to extracurricular conflicts.

“When we scheduled the dance, there was hardly anything on the calendar,” PTSA president Lorena Thorp said. “Now, we have more than three sports and five clubs with conflicts for that day.”

Principal Lee Nickles said the move will improve attendance at the dance and make it easier for staff.

“Having a dance on Friday night is tough for the staff,” Nickles said. “We are all exhausted by 4:15 p.m. on Friday. Working a dance from 7 to 11 p.m. would not have been fun.”

The dance will be held in the large gym, and refreshments will be served in the courtyard.

“My friends and I are glad the dance has been moved,” junior Courtney Strickland said. “We have a Spanish Club competition on Friday evening that we have to attend.”

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

After securing a \$500,000 grant to buy new instruments, the Leaguetown Symphony Orchestra will donate almost \$200,000 worth of used instruments to the high school.

“This is an incredible windfall for the orchestra program here,” orchestra teacher Tati Rowen said. “We have students using 30-year-old instruments that barely work. Some of the instruments that the city orchestra donated are less than 5 years old.”

Sophomore Gregory Yao said the violin he uses was his grandfather’s.

“It works, but it’s not in very good shape,” Yao said. “Ms. Rowen said we will get five violins from the city, and all of them are less than 10 years old. I can’t wait to use one of those.”

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-20 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

It's not unusual to see senior DeWayne Brown with his headphones plugged into his ears chanting what seem to be random letters.

"C - H - R - Y - S ..."

Most students probably have no idea how to spell "chrysanthemum," but after chanting it a few times, DeWayne said the correct spelling is cemented in his head.

DeWayne hopes all of the practice will pay off next weekend at his first UIL Invitational Meet.

"My goal is to take first place in every meet this year," he said. "I won a silver medal at the UIL State Academic Meet last year. This year, I want to be all gold."

DeWayne studies about two to three hours each day.

"The spelling list is crazy long," he said. "My mom records words in groups of 20. I listen to her saying the word, and then I spell it. I have to do it out loud — that helps me remember it."

Spelling coach and English teacher Tina Dreyfuss said she's never had a student so dedicated.

"Sometimes in class when I call on him, DeWayne will spell his response to get in a little more practice," she said. "He is driven, and I have no doubt that he will bring home the gold medal in May."

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24**

Science teacher Bert Garza loves birds.

In fact, he spends most of his free time either photographing birds or reading about them — especially endangered ones.

So when he found a Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-owl living in the woods behind the school, he felt like he won "the jackpot."

"I can hardly believe that I found the owl," Garza said. "There's never been one reported in this area. I sent my photos to the South Texas Audubon Society, and the director confirmed that it is a pygmy owl."

Garza found the pygmy owl, which is a gray-brown and about 16.5 cm long, during one of his night bird watching trips.

"The owl is living in an old woodpecker hole in this huge tree in the middle of the woods," he said. "I almost walked right past it, but then I heard a very light cooing."

Garza said he loves visiting the woods behind the school because he's seen so many different types of birds there.

"Usually I go during the day on the weekends," he said. "I don't go in the evening very often because I am not a fan of other wildlife, like coyotes and snakes."

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

Two juniors were arrested Tuesday for making a bomb threat last week, Leaguetown police chief Dustin DeShay said.

DeShay said the students wrote a threatening note on a bathroom mirror, saying two bombs would detonate at 3 p.m. The school was evacuated, and no bombs were found.

"A false bomb threat is a felony offense," DeShay said. "These boys could face some serious consequences."

Principal Lee Nickles said he is grateful that the police worked so quickly to make an arrest.

"Students need to know that we take this very seriously," he said. "A bomb threat is no joke."

The police were able to make the arrest from tips to the school district's anonymous tip line, Nickles said.

"A student called in and shared the two students' names," he said. "Chief DeShay said both students have already confessed to writing the note. They said they were trying to get out of a test."

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

## INVITATIONAL A • 2022 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

## ★ STORY #1

Board votes to name	19
stadium after Gully	19

## ★ STORY #2

PTSA moves	10
Valentine's dance	17
to Saturday	11

## ★ STORY #3

Orchestra to give school	24
'windfall' of instruments	25

## ★ STORY #4

<b>Spelling for G-O-L-D</b>	<b>20</b>
Senior hopes practice pays off	30

## ★ STORY #5

<b>For the birds</b>	<b>13</b>
Teacher finds rare owl	22
in woods behind school	22

## ★ STORY #6

Police arrest 2 in bomb threat	30
--------------------------------	----

**Invitational A Meet • 2022  
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

\_\_\_\_\_