

Headline Writing

DISTRICT MEET • 2021



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 22-28

Because of the ongoing pandemic, the district will survey senior parents about graduation ceremony choices. Parents will have two options: 1) a regular outdoor graduation with an audience at the football stadium, or 2) a simple walk-through graduation ceremony like the school did last year.

The survey opens Monday and closes Friday at 5 p.m. Parents can find the survey on the district home website.

“After we get the results, a district team will meet to plan the graduation,” Superintendent Ito Vanchenzo said. “We will choose the option with the most votes.”

Vanchenzo said he expects parents will choose the traditional outdoor ceremony. “So many people in our community have received their vaccines that I believe we can do a safe outdoor ceremony,” he said.

Senior Atlee Pine said she prefers the traditional graduation.

“This year has been so tough,” she said. “I want a regular graduation with all of my classmates. We need to celebrate together.”

Story 2 — Write: 1-line headline counting 26-32

Students who ordered a yearbook this year will receive it in August instead of May due to delays caused by the pandemic. Distribution will be Aug. 2-4.

“Normally, we finish the yearbook in March, but we couldn’t even do class photos until February,” yearbook editor senior Mara Liason said.

Liason said one of the benefits of a summer distribution is that more spring photos will be in the yearbook.

“Spring sports usually get shafted,” she said. “This year, we will have many more photos from a wider variety of spring games and events.”

Students can still purchase a yearbook for \$85 from Tisha Rothers, the yearbook adviser. Sales end April 15.

“I encourage everyone to buy a book,” Rothers said. “This is a year people will want to remember forever.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 9-15

To celebrate teachers and their hard work this year, the mayor will designate April 12-18 as the “Week of the Educator” for the town. More than 200 local businesses will offer teachers discounts and incentives.

“Our teachers have been heroes this year,” Mayor Bettye White said. “They put their lives on the line to teach our children.”

English teacher Beatrix Authur said she was “thrilled” when she heard about the week.

“I actually teared up,” she said. “Teaching virtually has been incredibly hard, and teaching in person was incredibly scary until we received our vaccines.”

Roberts’ Steakhouse owner Rob Roberts said teachers will receive a 50% discount on the entire menu for the week.

“I love that the mayor is doing this,” he said. “Our teachers deserve a few perks for all of their hard work and dedication to our students.”

Teachers can find the list of discounts and incentives on the city’s website.

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 13-20 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Junior Stella Getty hates to be bored. So when the pandemic hit, she knew she needed to find a new hobby.

After dabbling in sewing and painting, she found her new passion — baking and decorating cakes.

“It’s a good thing I have a big family who loves cakes,” Stella said. “In the beginning, I had to bake a lot of test cakes. No one in my family complained a bit.”

Her hobby quickly turned into a business as word spread about her cakes.

“All of the sudden, friends started asking me to bake cakes for them,” she said. “By September, I was baking two to three cakes a weekend.”

In November, her brother set up a website so people could order through there.

“My favorite cake so far was designed as a toilet paper roll with tiny chocolate cupcakes surrounding it,” Stella said. “It was for my cousin’s birthday.”

Stella offers five flavors for her cakes - vanilla, chocolate, lemon/raspberry, coconut and strawberry. All cakes are made from scratch.

“I have a list of standard designs, but I also make custom cakes,” she said.

Social studies teacher Polly Stenson ordered a birthday cake from Stella for her daughter.

“It was absolutely beautiful and delicious,” she said. “My daughter said the cake was the best part of her birthday.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24

Senior Theo Manor has one goal this track season — beat his dad at the 100-meter high hurdles.

Theo’s dad holds the school record for the 100m hurdles — 13.52 seconds.

“My dad is my biggest fan and my best coach,” Theo said. “He wants my name to replace his on the plaque in the trophy case at school.”

Theo’s dad, Marvin Manor, set the school record in 1994 and won second at the UIL State Track Meet that year.

“My dad was a school legend,” Theo said. “And he wants that for me, too.”

Last year, the UIL State Track Meet was cancelled because of the pandemic. Theo said he was devastated.

“I was ready last year,” he said. “My times going into the season were solid, and I was getting faster each run.”

During the pandemic, Theo said he and his dad trained almost every day.

“I am in the best shape of my life,” he said. “This year, nothing is going to stop me.”

Story 6 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-22

Starting April 1, students will see a new face roaming the halls of the school — police officer Lauri Dylan. After a partnership agreement between the school district and the Leaguetown Police Department, Dylan was reassigned as the school resource office.

“I am excited about this new opportunity,” Dylan said. “My first priority will be building relationships with the students.”

Dylan will have an office near the main entrance of the school, but she said she doesn’t expect to be there much.

“I will be in the halls talking with students and ensuring the safety of all,” she said.

The school district pursued the partnership with the police department after two incidents last year where teachers were threatened on campus by outside individuals.

“No one was hurt in either incident, but we’ve come to realize we need more security at our school,” Principal Stanley Faccio said. “We don’t need an officer to monitor our students. We need an officer to help keep the off-campus issues from becoming on-campus issues.”

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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

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

DISTRICT • 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. Highlight or underline important words in the story. Then write a sentence based on those highlighted/underlined words.
3. After you have your first sentence, go back and change or delete 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, adverb, adjective and prepositional phrases especially — are on the same line. Play with words until 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. 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 printed 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. Individual headlines that are under or over the count are disqualified.
6. Use active verbs in either present, future or present perfect tense. Make sure your headline matches the tone of the story. If it is a fun story, write a fun headline; if it is a serious story, write a serious headline.
7. Never 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 the unusual. The main headline does not require a verb. The secondary headline does.
9. 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
 - avoid spelling out numbers (use numerals - 1, 20, etc.)

★ STORY #1

District to survey parents	26
about graduation options	24

★ STORY #2

Yearbooks to arrive in August	29
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★ STORY #3

City to honor	13
educators	9
April 12-18	11

★ STORY #4

Scratching an itch	18
Junior goes into cake business	30

★ STORY #5

Runs in his blood	17
Hurdler sets sights	19
on breaking record	18

★ STORY #6

School hires officer	20
to improve safety	17