

# Headline Writing

DISTRICT MEET • 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 18-24

As a service to the community, the National Honor Society will provide lunch for students each weekday during spring break at League Elementary. Several local businesses are supplying most of the food.

“So many families are struggling financially right now,” NHS president Natasha Dipu said. “We wanted to do something to help.”

Dipu said NHS will provide a vegetarian option at each lunch.

“We tried to be creative, but we don’t have access to a stove or oven,” she said. “We will have sandwiches and hummus every day, and then we will have other treats as well.”

The lunches will run from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Students will be encouraged to eat outside if the weather permits

League Market is donating sandwich supplies and chips for the meals, and Godon’s Produce is donating vegetables and fruits. Other local businesses made monetary donations for the snacks and desserts.

## Story 2 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 20-26

Socks matter to assistant principal Jon-Marc Edwards.

“I love fun socks,” he said. “The weirder and wilder — the better.”

Edwards says he spends more time choosing his socks in the morning than picking out the rest of his outfit.

“Sock are important,” he said. “They define you.”

If that’s the case, Edwards is one colorful guy.

“Today I have on my bacon and eggs socks,” he said. “It seems appropriate since that’s what I had for breakfast. Fun socks make me happy, and every student wants a happy assistant principal.”

Students began noticing the new principal’s socks at the beginning of the year.

“His socks never match his outfit,” senior Carlos Herrera said. “But he always has a story for each pair. I love it.”

Edwards says his favorite pair are his Van Gogh socks. He has several pairs.

“Van Gogh was a legend, and it’s nice to wear a legend on your feet,” he said. “Plus, I always feel more creative on the days when I wear those socks.”

## Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 12-18

Because of the substitute shortage, Principal Sky Candun is looking for parent volunteers to help in classrooms throughout the day.

Parents who have completed the district’s volunteer application may volunteer for one hour or one day to help cover classrooms.

“We need help,” Candun said. “We haven’t had enough substitutes all year, and teachers have had to give up conference periods to cover classes. We must stop doing that.”

Teachers are behind in grading and responding to parent phone calls, Candun said.

“We’ve stretched our teachers as far as they can go,” she said. “It’s time we give them some help.”

Parents can sign up to volunteer through a portal on the school’s website.

“My mom is going to help on Fridays,” senior Sasha Catu said. “I hope the students don’t act up when she’s subbing.”

**Story 4 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 14-20**

The school board will hold a Donut Talk for students from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 5, in the library. Board members said they want to meet with students about their concerns, ideas and goals for the district.

“We hear from teachers, administrators and parents quite often,” Board President Sue Dholakia said. “We hardly ever hear from the students, and they are the most important stakeholders.”

Dholakia said the meeting will be informal, and students are welcome to come and go. All board members will be present.

“Students can talk to a board member one-on-one,” she said. “We hope to hear what they want for this district and what their concerns are.”

Student Council President Gloria Gonzalez said she and several of her friends will attend.

“I love this idea,” Gonzalez, a senior, said. “I never thought the school board was interested in hearing from us. My friends and I have several suggestions to make the school better.”

Junior Cal Simpkin said he’s going at least for one donut.

“I don’t have a lot to share, but I love donuts,” he said. “I do want to tell them that we need a better scoreboard in the gym.”

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line headline counting 26-32**

Next school year, students will have the opportunity to take Russian with other Leaguetown school district students through a virtual platform.

“One good thing came out of the pandemic,” Principal Sky Candun said. “We learned we can have classes virtually.”

For this class, the teacher will work remotely, but the students will be at their respective high schools in a classroom together.

“We will provide laptops and headphones for students,” Candun said. “We’ve wanted to offer this class for years, but we never had enough interest.”

Yuri Gagarin, a retired social studies teacher who is also certified to teach Russian, will be the instructor.

“I am going to try to visit each class in person every other week or so,” he said.

Freshman Neda Morrol said she loves that the school will offer Russian.

“I am excited to take the class,” she said. “I know it will be challenging, but I’ve always wanted to learn Russian.”

**Story 6 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 18-24 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

When senior Derek Kennedy’s pastor recruited him for a lacrosse team when he was 12 years old, he was hesitant to play the sport. He didn’t want anything to get in the way of football.

“My dad convinced me that lacrosse could help keep me in shape for football,” Derek said. “I thought I’d only play for a season or two.”

Or three or four. Now five.

After season one, Derek fell in love with the sport.

“I always jokingly tell people that I got into lacrosse because of divine intervention,” he said.

Divine intervention or not, Derek thrived in the sport. By the time he was a sophomore, college recruiters were knocking on his door.

“It was the craziest thing when colleges starting reaching out to me,” he said. “I always thought I’d play football in college like my dad. But after that first season, I had a change of heart. Lacrosse became my first love, and I played football to stay in shape for the lacrosse season.”

Last week, Derek, a goalie, signed with Syracuse University in New York. He received a full scholarship.

“My objective was always to get some sort of scholarship for sports,” he said.

## District 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

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■ 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

*main headline*

*secondary headline*

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■ 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

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■ **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

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■ **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

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■ **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

*main headline* -----

*secondary headline* -----

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

## DISTRICT • 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. 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

NHS to serve lunch	18
during spring break	19

★ STORY #2

<b>Put a sock on it</b>	16
Assistant principal says	24
style begins with feet	22

★ STORY #3

Principal asks	14
parents to help	15
with sub shortage	17

★ STORY #4

Board to host talk	18
for students April 5	20

★ STORY #5

School to offer Russian in fall	31
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★ STORY #6

<b>(La)crosse his heart</b>	20
Senior signs with Syracuse	26