

# Headline Writing

STATE 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: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24

It's a good thing the library no longer charges overdue fees.

Math teacher Brian O'Leary might have gone broke after returning his mother's copy of the classic novel "A Separate Peace" by John Knowles. It was 52 years overdue.

"We were packing my mom's house because she was moving to an assisted living facility when I saw the book on her bookshelf," O'Leary said. "I was shocked when I opened it and saw 'Property of Leaguetown ISD' stamped in it."

O'Leary said his mother had no idea she had not returned the book.

"My mom remembers reading the book in high school and assumed she returned it," he said.

Librarian Heather Berry said the book is a first edition and will be displayed in the library.

"A first edition is pretty rare," she said. "I've already had two local collectors call me about the book. The district may decide to sell it in the future, but right now, we want to share it with our faculty and students."

## Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 20-26

After a sluggish start, the girls varsity softball team is on a winning streak. The team has won its last nine games, including its first two playoff games.

"If we win tomorrow night, we head to the regional quarterfinals," varsity coach Della Marcos said. "The team has never made it that far in the playoffs."

Marcos said the team plays Liberty High School at Southside tomorrow at 7 p.m.

"We hope everyone comes out and supports us," she said. "We could use a good fan base. The team is ready, but this will be a tough game."

Earlier in the season, the team lost to Liberty 0-6.

"Liberty has one of the best pitchers in the state," senior Rochelle Stasney said. "She shut us out the first time we faced her. We have to hit to win."

Stasney, who is the starting catcher, said the season has been "incredible."

"We were ranked at the bottom of our district at the beginning of the year," she said. "Instead of getting upset by that, we used the ranking to keep us motivated."

## Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-16

For 20 consecutive years, math teacher Harry Hamilton has never missed a day of work. This Thursday, the school board will recognize Hamilton with a plaque and a variety of gift cards to local businesses.

"Mr. Hamilton's dedication to his students and this district needs to be applauded," board member Gerig Hunter said. "He also has been blessed with great health."

Hunter said when word got out about Hamilton, several businesses contacted the school board to donate gift cards.

"We couldn't believe how fast the word spread and how much support came in," he said. "We received more than \$500 worth of gift cards."

Hamilton said he never set out to have perfect attendance.

"It just kind of happened," he said. "I am never sick, and I love my job. Why would I want to be anywhere else?"

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

When junior Corey Curby's iPhone fell out of his pocket while he was fishing in the Colorado River in December, he figured it was lost forever.

"I was in about two feet of water casting my line when I thought I saw a snake," Corey said. "I jumped back, and I think that's when my phone fell out of my pocket."

After searching for an hour, Corey gave up and went home. Since the incident, Corey has been using an old iPhone 4.

"The phone is so old that the only thing I can do with it is call people," he said.

Last week, Corey got a surprise when his dentist called his mother and said he had found the phone.

"The call made my day," Corey said. "I can't believe the phone still worked. I had it in a watertight case. I guess those things really work."

Avery Randall, a Leaguetown dentist, was kayaking with his son when he found the phone.

"It was lodged halfway under a rock in shallow water," he said. "I almost stepped on it."

When Randall examined the phone, he recognized the name on the phone as one of his patients.

"I figured the phone was toast, but thought I would try to charge it and see what happened," he said. "After a few minutes on my car charger, I heard the phone come to life. I think it's time I invest in one of those cases for my own phone."

Dr. Randall found the phone about a mile down the river from where Corey was fishing.

"It's wild how far the phone travelled, and it barely has a scratch on it," Corey said. "Buying that case was a good decision."

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 18-24 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

When senior Jenna Fisher was 13 years old, she made her to-do list for her 18th birthday.

Buy a lottery ticket. Get a tattoo. Go skydiving.

She didn't get a tattoo, and she didn't go skydiving. But she did buy a lottery ticket, and she's thrilled she did.

"After I scratched everything off, I probably read the instructions a dozen different times," she said. "I couldn't believe it. I won \$25,000. I couldn't stop smiling."

But it was true. Jenna's ticket was the highest winning ticket ever sold at Dean's Corner Store.

"Best birthday present ever," she said. "I am so glad I made that list. Now, I feel like I have to get a tattoo and sky dive, but my parents are not so eager for me to do either of those things."

Jenna's first purchase with her winnings was a new computer. The rest of the money will go toward college, she said.

"I have a partial scholarship to Texas Tech, but there is still a lot to pay," she said.

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

To observe Teacher Appreciation Week, the National Honor Society will wash teachers' cars this week. The sign-up list is located in the teachers' lounge.

"We have time spots all day Tuesday through Friday," Student Council president April Ling said. "If teachers leave their keys with us, we also will vacuum and clean the inside of their cars."

Ling said the Student Council wants to celebrate teachers because of how hard they have worked this year.

"It has been a tough year for teachers," she said. "Teaching virtually and in-person is hard. We want teachers to know how grateful we are for them."

Student Council members will take turns washing the cars.

"We have members with off periods throughout the day, so most of the car washing will happen during the day," Ling said.

Science teacher Kim Ruthers said she can't wait to get her car washed.

"I am definitely giving them my keys," she said. "I have a 2-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son, so there are Cheerios and trash all over my car. This is such a great treat for us."

## State 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*main headline*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*secondary headline*

■ 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!****STATE • 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

<b>A Collector's Peace</b>	19
Teacher returns book	20
50 years after due date	23

## ★ STORY #2

Liberty to challenge	20
softball's winning streak	25

## ★ STORY #3

District honors	15
math teacher's	14
attendance	10

## ★ STORY #4

<b>A good call</b>	11
Junior's iPhone survives river	30

## ★ STORY #5

<b>25,000 reasons to smile</b>	23
Senior wins big with lottery	28

## ★ STORY #6

NHS offers car washes to faculty	32
----------------------------------	----