

# Headline Writing

District Meet • 2019



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 entry.

**Put your number NOT YOUR NAME on your paper.**

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

Students who are applying for National Honor Society will no longer need to ask teachers for letters of recommendation, NHS sponsor Helda Gruyuere said.

Instead, Gruyuere said the committee will distribute a rating list of potential members to all faculty.

“Teachers, especially our advanced placement teachers, were being overloaded with requests for letters,” she said. “This should ease their burden.”

The rating sheet will ask teachers to rate students on characteristics such as character, integrity and leadership.

“Teachers will only have to write a comment if they score a student low — with a 1 or 2 on a particular quality,” she said.

Junior Kenny Roper said the change made applying to NHS much easier.

“My sister did it two years ago, and I remember how stressed she was about getting the recommendations,” he said. “This new way is a breeze.”

## Story 2 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-17

A group of sophomores created a new club, LAN — Lobos Against Negativity — with the plan to focus on acts to increase positivity at school.

“Our first action will be to put positive statements and quotations on every door in the school,” club president Sierra Nova said. “Our members are gathering the statements and quotes this week.”

Nova invites any student who wants to bring “good vibes” to the school to join the group.

“A bunch of my friends and I were getting tired of all the negativity and complaining,” she said. “We decided to do something positive, and hopefully we can change the atmosphere.”

Nova said students don’t realize how lucky they are.

“We have little to no poverty in our town, and we have little to no crime in our town,” she said. “Those two facts alone should make every student smile. But students get so caught up in negativity that it’s hard to remember these things. We are going to work to remind them.”

## Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-24

The special education teachers are encouraging students to wear blue next Tuesday, World Autism Day, to show support for students with autism.

“This will be the first time the school will observe the day,” special education teacher Rayna Rodriguez said. “It would mean a lot to our students to see a sea of blue on Tuesday.”

The special education department also will hand out blue ribbons for students and staff on Tuesday morning.

“We want our students with autism to know they are supported, not just by us, but by the entire school,” Rodriguez said.

Senior Jenni Blackwell said she plans to dress in blue from head to toe.

“My little brother has autism,” she said. “This is a great idea to bring awareness and support. My mom even bought me blue hairspray.”

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24**

Junior Elijah Ramos is a self-described introvert who is about to have to give a speech to more than 1,000 people.

“I would rather write than speak,” he said.

That’s what got him into this situation in the first place.

Elijah won the Peace Project’s national essay contest last month, and next week he will fly to Washington, D.C. to present his essay to lawmakers and policymakers.

“To say I am nervous is a mild understatement,” he said. “I am terrified.”

Elijah wrote his essay in the fall and was notified in March that he won and would be expected to speak at the award ceremony.

“I was so excited I won until they told me I had to speak,” he said. “I tried to get out of it, but the director convinced me that my paper would have a bigger impact if I presented it.”

The paper is a blueprint for peace in El Salvador.

“That country is plagued with gang violence,” he said. “In 2017, there was one murder every hour. And you have to remember it is a very small country. My great-grandparents were from El Salvador, so that is why I take such an interest in the country.”

Not only did Elijah win a paid trip to Washington, D.C. for himself and his parents, but he also won a \$5,000 scholarship.

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 12-18 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32**

Students and staff at the Friday night spring athletics bonfire got more than they expected. As the band started to play the school fight song, two naked males streaked through the crowd wearing only rubber masks.

“The guys ran right past me,” senior Bella Strong said. “I couldn’t stop laughing.”

Not everyone found the humor in the incident. Principal Kayla Leon is offering a \$500 reward for information on the identity of the two males.

“I don’t think they were our students,” Leon said. “Regardless, they should face consequences for indecent exposure. There were lots of young children there. It was completely inappropriate.”

The two males wore presidents’ masks. One was Donald Trump, and one was Bill Clinton.

“I thought it was hilarious,” senior Ben Stevens said. “I know Ms. Leon is not happy about it, but it wasn’t that big of a deal. They ran fast. Nobody saw very much.”

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

The Student Council will sponsor a dance-a-thon Friday, April 19, to raise money for school custodian Anna Hudson, who has a brain tumor and will have surgery on April 22.

“Our goal is to raise \$1,000 for Ms. Hudson and her family,” Student Council president Owen Channing said.

Hudson, a single parent with three children under the age of 12, said she is stunned by the support.

“The staff also set up a meal calendar for me and my family,” she said. “I am overwhelmed by the love from this community. I never expected this.”

Principal Kayla Leon said Hudson is the best custodian she’s ever worked with.

“Anna has been here for 10 years, and I don’t know what I would do without her,” Leon said. “Of course, we are going to support her. She’s supported us for the last decade.”

Hudson said the tumor is benign, and her doctors expect a full recovery.

“I’m lucky in so many ways,” she said. “I will be out for the rest of the year, but I will be back next year. Nothing is going to stop that.”

**District Meet • 2019**  
**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

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

**DISTRICT • 2019**

## **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 should maintain consistency between upstyle and downstyle. You may write in block letters.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Judges are instructed to disqualify any headline that is over or under 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; consequently, 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 headlines rules for you to follow:

- avoid starting the headline with a verb
- generally avoid using names
- 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

NHS changes application process 31

## ★ STORY #2

Club focuses 12  
on sharing 10  
'good vibes' 12

## ★ STORY #3

Teachers ask students 21  
to wear blue for autism 23

## ★ STORY #4

**Saying his peace** 16  
Junior to present essay 23  
to lawmakers in D.C. 20

## ★ STORY #5

**Bare sighting** 13  
Leon offers reward for streakers 32

## ★ STORY #6

Dance to raise funds for janitor 32



**Yippee!! You're the director of the journalism contests. To make your life a little easier...**

**WE HAVE ENCLOSED:**

- The contests
- Judging criteria
- A statement to the judges
- A statement to the contestants
- Contest Tips. (Provides examples of how stories/heads should have been written and a sample story. Clip a copy to each entry to provide immediate feedback.)

**NOW, YOU NEED TO:**

- Make certain you have read the journalism section of the *UIL Journalism Handbook*. You can download it free from the UIL website at: [http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism\\_Handbook\\_2018-19.pdf](http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism_Handbook_2018-19.pdf).
- Inventory the contest packet. Hopefully, there won't be any problems. If you find one, please call it to my attention. Call me at work at 512/232-4924, home at 512/740-3463 or e-mail me at [jacton@uiltexas.org](mailto:jacton@uiltexas.org).
- **READ THE ENCLOSED STATEMENT TO YOUR JUDGES.**  
Discuss the judging criteria and clarifications with the judges.
- **Do not give the tips to students.**
- Share the "Tips" with the judges (**BEFORE** they judge) and clip one copy to each contestant's entry **AFTER JUDGING**. Judges should write directly on EVERY student's entry and then attach one copy of the Contest Tips to each entry.
- Thanks and good luck!

# Statement to Judges

## JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

***Please copy and distribute the following statement to the judges***

1. Divide papers among the judges.
2. Every paper **MUST** be read and edited by at least one judge. *No paper should EVER be returned without written comments.*
3. Every judge does not have to read every paper. Strive for two readings for each paper. A third reading may be necessary for papers that contend for placing in the top six.
4. Avoid sarcasm or unduly harsh criticism. Remember: these are high school students, not professionals.
5. Please review the “Tips” for each contest. This sheet is consistent with the contest manual and what has been taught at conferences.
6. Realize that the UIL style may differ slightly from what you have been taught, what you practice or your newspaper’s style. If you have serious disagreement, please take them up with the UIL office, not the contestants or the meet director. For example, in the news, feature and editorial writing contests, it is not necessary to identify the school, Leaguetown High School. We create this contest as if students attend Leaguetown High School. Therefore, we assume high school students know the name of their school. Also, since AP style constantly changes, watch simply for writers to follow a consistent style. Some students (and newspapers) prefer addressing people with Mr./Mrs./Ms. title on second and subsequent uses.
7. In the Feature Writing contest, students have the freedom to develop scenes as they feel the scenes *may* have existed. The scenes must be a natural extension of the story. Please read “Contest tips” before judging.
8. In the editorial writing contest, students have the freedom to propose solutions or suggest answers they feel might resolve the problem. They do not have to be those proposed on the fact sheet. Also, they are urged to write in third person, but they may use first person plural on occasion.
9. In the headline writing contest: the main deck of a main/secondary headline combination may contain but does not need a verb. For example:

## Out of Air



# Statement to the Contestants

## JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

*Please read the following statement to contestants*

1. Place your number in the upper right hand corner of each page of your entry. Do not put your name or your school's name on any part of the contest entry. If you do, you may be disqualified.
2. Write on one side of the paper only. Write legibly. This is a request, not a requirement.
3. It is suggested that you double space so judges may edit and write comments more extensively on your entry. This is a request, not a requirement.
4. You may use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus (bound or electronic) during News, Editorial, Feature and Headline contest. You may also use an AP stylebook. You may not use a journalism text or other textbook. No resources are allowed during the Copy Editing contest.
5. You may not talk during the contest. If you have a question, raise your hand and the contest monitor will come to you.
6. If you use a computer, you are responsible should it malfunction. You will have the remaining time to complete the contest in longhand, but you will not be given extra time. You must complete the print command before the monitor asks everyone to quit writing. If the computer malfunctions do not make noise trying to fix it. The monitor will ask you to leave if you are causing too much commotion. You may not use a computer in the Headline Writing contest or the Copy Editing contest.
7. Make sure all of your electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, etc.) are turned off. You may be disqualified for disrupting the contest if your devices go off.
8. When you are finished, please turn in your paper and quietly exit.

Good luck.



## **JUDGING CRITERIA**

### **SPRING MEET JOURNALISM CONTESTS**

In an effort to standardize judging procedures statewide, the League office has compiled a list of journalism contest judging guidelines. This list of guidelines will be included in each district and regional contest packet and will be available to State Meet contest judges. It is the responsibility of each journalism contest director to see that all contest judges are familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.

#### **■ HEADLINE WRITING (30 minutes) NEW TIME FOR 2019!**

1. Within count. **Note:** All letters, digits, punctuation marks, spaces, grammatical marks count as one (1).
2. Wording specific, accurate; unnecessary wording omitted.
3. Verb needed in main, secondary or both decks. At times, though, a verb is not necessary in both the main and secondary head.
4. Emphasis on active verbs.
5. Past tense avoided.
6. Split phrases (modifiers, verbs) avoided.
7. Redundancy in wording avoided.
8. Does not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
9. Main headlines not dependent on secondary headlines.
10. Secondary headlines emphasize significant aspect of news.
11. Grammar, spelling, punctuation correct.
  - A. It is permissible to use upstyle (ALL CAPS) or downstyle headlines.
  - B. Students need not complete all six headlines to win. It is possible that five good headlines will win over six mediocre ones, or four excellent heads will win over six poor headlines. The final decision rests with the judges, but no contestants shall be disqualified solely on the basis of not completing all six headlines.

#### **■ EDITORIAL WRITING (45 minutes)**

1. Introduction presents problem, provides staff stance.
2. Lead grabs reader's attention.
3. Evidence provided to support stance taken.
4. Direct quotes avoided unless absolutely necessary.
5. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
6. Other viewpoints presented and evidence is shown to refute those viewpoints.
7. Conclusion recaps staff position and contains call to action and/or solution.
8. Third person emphasized, although first person plural may be used occasionally.
9. Editorial tone fair, mature.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ FEATURE WRITING (60 minutes)

1. Lead grabs reader's attention and fits mood of story. It is permissible for students to set a scene for the feature prompt. The scene may include details that are not in the prompt.
2. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
3. Slang, clichés, jargon avoided.
4. Facts presented in logical sequence.
5. Smooth transitions.
6. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
7. Persons identified fully, accurately.
8. Feature theme fully developed.
9. Utilizes time peg (if necessary)
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ NEWS WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Sound news judgment in lead selection.
2. Facts presented in descending order of importance.
3. Information flows. Smooth transitions.
4. People identified fully, accurately.
5. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
6. Extraneous information omitted; writing tight.
7. Wording active.
8. All news questions answered. Newspaper style incorporated.
9. Editorialization avoided.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Neatness

## ■ STYLE/TITLES

- ✓ Newspaper style includes the option of using titles of Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. with names of adults. Students should be identified fully at first mention and by last name thereafter (1st use - senior Jeanne Acton; second and subsequent uses - Acton or Ms. Acton). It is permissible to use first names only on the second reference in feature stories. AP style calls for adults to be identified by full name at first mention, and then with appropriate title and last name thereafter. Be aware of deviations from AP style. If a contestant is consistent in the use of their style, it is not recommended you penalize the contestant for not following strict AP style. We ask that you look for consistency and understandability in the use of a contestant's style.

## ■ SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Journalistic proficiency shall be the standard by which entries are judged. In papers of similar journalistic quality, secondary considerations of grammar, spelling and neatness may be used to determine contest results. The contest does not intend, however, to test grammar or spelling skills, and each entry should be judged on its journalistic merit before other considerations come into play.

## ■ COPY EDITING (15 minutes) NEW CONTEST FOR 2019

- ✓ A key to the Copy Editing Contest will be included with your material. Part III is graded only to break ties.