

Headline Writing

District Meet • 2024



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. **Put your number on your paper.**

Story 1 — Write: 1-line headline counting 24-30

District systems will return to normal Monday after a possible ransomware attack shut down all computer systems for five days. Chief information officer Kelly Briley said students, teachers and administrators will receive new account passwords and will be able to access school accounts after being locked out.

“We still aren’t certain who is responsible for shutting down all accounts, but we believe it was a ransomware attack,” Briley said. “We have been able to reset most of the systems and add additional security to prevent any future cyber attacks.”

As a result of the system shutdown, most teachers could not upload grades that were due Thursday.

“I’ve turned in as much late work as possible to see if I can possibly bring up my grade this week,” freshman Daniel Armstrong said. “This break has actually been helpful in that way.”

Briley said support personnel will be available throughout the day Monday in the gym to help students and staff with any issues.

“I’m ready to put this whole week behind us,” principal Silpa Sharpe said. “Keeping 3,000 students focused with no internet access isn’t easy these days.”

Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 22-28

The Career and Technical Education department will offer a new firefighting program next year through Leaguetown Community College. After two years in the program, students could graduate as state-certified firefighters.

“This is an incredible opportunity for our students who are interested in firefighting to get started in their careers,” CTE director Brett Braddy said. “We have seen a lot of interest in starting this program through LCC and hope the program can become a jewel in the crown of our expansive CTE offerings in the district.”

More than 120 students completed a preliminary interest form.

“I’m thrilled we might have a program like this at our high school,” freshman Samuel Leung said. “My grandpa was a firefighter for more than 30 years, and I’m excited to tell him about the class. Maybe I’ll follow in his footsteps one day.”

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

Senior Roy Moreno has broken the record for the most scholarship money awarded to any student in the district — \$3 million. Moreno hit that mark by receiving offers from 100 different colleges and universities.

“I haven’t decided where I want to attend school yet,” Moreno said. “So I just applied all over to see which school would offer me the most money to attend. I guess I got my answer. I still haven’t picked a school, though.”

In addition to having a 4.9 cumulative GPA, Moreno is president of National Honor Society and the Spanish Club and is No. 4 in the class.

“I would recommend to anyone else looking to get scholarships to be open-minded about different schools,” he said. “Look at some of the smaller schools out there, not just the huge universities. Build partnerships with people on those campuses and make your goals clear to them. There’s a ton of money out there. You just need to know where to look.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 6-12 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 14-20

Junior percussionist Dominique Swann recorded himself playing one of his favorite tunes, “The Final Countdown” by Europe, on his marimba, an instrument with wooden bars he hits with a mallet. He later posted the video to TikTok. When he woke up the next morning, to Swann’s surprise, the video had more than a million views.

“I wasn’t recording my performance to go viral,” he said. “It was because it’s a funny song and I thought the other people in band would think it was funny. I pulled my instrument out into my front yard and set up my phone on a tripod.”

As Swann performed, neighbors out walking their dogs and children playing outside surrounded Swann to watch him play.

“It’s not an easy song to tackle with just one percussion instrument, so I guess it looked kind of cool,” he said. “For some reason, it drew a crowd.”

The video has been liked, shared and stitched thousands of times. Some have even stitched Swann’s video with their own instrumental accompaniment.

“One guy played his trombone with the stitch of my TikTok,” he said. “It was kind of a funny contrast, but it turned out pretty cool.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

A new coffee house will open across the street from campus next Friday. The establishment, called Mustang Espresso, will be owned and operated by Leaguetown alumni Frederick Baker, who played football for Southern Methodist University.

“I have a lot of Leaguetown pride, which is why I wanted to bring my wife and kids back to my hometown and open a business that the community and students will benefit from,” Baker said. “I named my place of business after one of the most important periods of my life and to honor the time I spent playing for the SMU Mustangs.”

Baker earned a scholarship to SMU after playing tight end for the Leopards when he was in high school.

“I hope students enjoy their time in high school while they can,” he said. “There’s nothing like Friday nights in Leaguetown. That’s one of the reasons I wanted to bring my family back here to start our business.”

The shop will offer espressos, lattes, cappuccinos, but the beans at Mustang Espresso will be sourced from Italy and roasted by an artisan roaster there.

“It will be nice to have a place to grab a coffee right before school or before volleyball practice,” junior Anna Jay said. “Although having them here might not be the best thing for my coffee addiction.”

Story 6 — Write: 1-line headline counting 24-30

The National Honor Society, Fitness Club and Clean Up The Environment Club are hosting a food drive through April 12. Until then, the clubs will collect labeled, nonperishable foods using collection boxes in the cafeteria and library.

Items will be delivered to the Leaguetown Food Pantry after the collection deadline.

“We got the idea at a Presidents Advisory Club meeting,” NHS president Allison Duran said. “We see a lot of food collection and donation around the holidays, but then it sort of drops off. We wanted to do something to continue to provide for those with food insecurity in our community.”

The clubs are specifically asking for healthy food donations, such as brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal and canned fruits and vegetables.

“We are proud of our students who saw a need in the community and are taking it upon themselves to do something,” Fitness Club sponsor Mark Vance said. “It’s also been a fun way to collaborate with some of the other clubs at school and do some good.”

The three club presidents spoke during the spring pep rally March 29 to promote the food drive and share some stories about food insecurity with the student body.

“A lot of people in our community don’t know where their next meal is coming from,” Duran said. “If we can do anything to knock a dent in that hunger, we want to do it.”

District Meet • 2024 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 Meet • 2024

Headline Writing Contest Tips and Samples

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critiquing/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 five 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. AP Style provides guidelines for headline writing. It is not required for contestants to follow AP Style, but a consistent style is recommended.

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
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations
- do not end the headline with a period

★ STORY #1

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Cyber attack disables systems | 29 |
|-------------------------------|----|

★ STORY #2

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| New firefighting program | 24 |
| offers certification path | 25 |

★ STORY #3

| | |
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| Senior awarded \$3M | 18 |
| in scholarships | 15 |
| from 100 colleges | 17 |

★ STORY #4

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|----------------------|-----------|
| Swann's song | 12 |
| Marimba cover video | 19 |
| goes viral on TikTok | 20 |

★ STORY #5

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| Pony espresso | 13 |
| Alumnus to open new coffee house | 32 |

★ STORY #6

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| Clubs organize food drive | 25 |
|---------------------------|----|