

Headline Writing

Regional Meet • 2025



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

The newly formed Politics Club will have an ice cream party Thursday after school in AP Government teacher Lauri Metcalf's classroom. Club leaders invite all students to attend and receive information about joining the organization.

"The Politics Club is a nonpartisan group that will meet every week to discuss what's going on with our local, state and national government," club president and founder senior Jason Robles said. "When we founded the club, we decided to be really strict about the nonpartisan aspect of the group so that everyone feels welcome. Our mission is to educate members about how our government works beyond what we learn in the classroom."

For its May 6 meeting, Robles said he has invited the four candidates running for mayor, and he will moderate the meeting in a town-hall style conversation.

"Jason is going to make a fantastic leader for a club like this," Metcalf said. "Meeting with the mayoral candidates was all his idea, and he called them himself to set up the event. It wouldn't surprise me if he ran for office himself one day."

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

Texas Solar, Inc. announced it will donate rooftop solar panels for the high school and two middle schools in the district. The donation includes funding for necessary updates to the rooftops as well as building automation controls for all three campuses.

"Not only is this an environmentally friendly move for the district, but we also expect to save some money on our electric bills thanks to this generous donation," Superintendent Elvira Trevino said. "These panels will be a source of pride."

Work on the project will begin the last week of school and will continue throughout the summer.

"These campuses receive the right amount of sunlight, so they were the perfect candidates for our donation," Texas Solar CEO Brittany Castalaneta said. "As we look to expand our operations in this part of the state, we think it's important to give back. We are thrilled to have our solar panels here in town."

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 16-22

Three out of the high school's 10 bus routes could be cut next year if the district approves a proposal at its Tuesday meeting. District Chief Financial Officer Becky Trate proposed the change as part of the district's ongoing efforts to correct a \$20 million budget shortfall.

"This is just one of a number of changes the district will have to make as we move forward with our 2026 budget," she said. "Changes like these are inevitable."

The routes will be combined with existing routes, which will extend travel time for both the morning and afternoon bus rides.

"The earliest we'll expect students at the bus stop will be 6 a.m.," Director of Transportation Yvonne Fernandez said. "The afternoon is more of a concern because we have multiple athletic teams who have to travel after school. I'm not looking forward to having to cut drivers either. I hope our community is ready for students to leave before the sun comes up and get home after the sun goes down."

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-14 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 22-28

As she stepped on the green grass to lay out her mats, her first student arrived.

“Namaste,” the student said as he took his place for yoga class. This greeting is a sign of respect for the yoga teacher — junior Nina Abel.

Abel has been doing yoga ever since she could remember. Now, she is teaching classes to people in the community for \$20 per week to raise money for a two-week trip to India.

“I guess you don’t see a lot of high school students teaching yoga classes in the park,” she said. “I don’t remember a time when I wasn’t doing yoga, so teaching seemed like an easy way for me to earn some money.”

If she reaches her \$8,000 goal, Abel will travel to India with her mother and 10 other friends from her local yoga studio to attend a yoga retreat in Rishikesh. In addition to yoga, the retreat will include sightseeing, hiking, cooking classes and meditation.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime dream trip for my mom and me,” Abel said. “Since my mom has taught yoga classes before, she helped me put together a program that’s safe for beginners and advanced yoga enthusiasts, so anyone can join.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 6-12 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 22-28

She loves blueberry, peach and strawberry rhubarb, but when counselor Pamala Adams isn’t helping students throughout the school day, she’s baking key lime pies — her favorite. Now, after 20 years of baking for fun, Adams can say she’s the champion after winning League County’s Spring Fair Baking Contest last weekend.

“I love baking cakes, cookies, tarts or anything, but after I perfected the crust technique, I just couldn’t stop baking pies,” she said. “It’s like muscle memory now. I wake up every Saturday and start putting together crusts.”

Adams said she keeps her freezer stocked with more than 100 pre-made pie crusts and makes a pie almost every day, donating them to teachers on campus, the local homeless shelter or charity organizations. Last week, it was her key lime pie that won her the trophy.

“I’ve never tasted anything like that key lime,” contest judge Mayor Donnie Hunco said. “It was the perfect combination of sweet and tart. The swirls of toasted marshmallow on top were so elegant. I almost didn’t want to cut into it and ruin it. I took lots of pictures.”

Adams said her next step is to create an Instagram account to show off her latest pie creations, and she hopes to open a retail home bakery one day.

“I don’t think I have it in me to be a baker full time,” she said, “but I can see myself making a little extra cash with my pies in the future. Plus, I love the students at school too much to leave the job I have.”

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

Junior Sunny Smithfield’s documentary “Egg on Your Face” won the State Championship in UIL’s State Film Festival last week at the University of Texas. The documentary featured a local egg farm and one chicken’s daily life.

“My parents started buying pasture-raised eggs last year,” she said. “That really got me thinking about what a chicken goes through on an egg farm. So I wanted to showcase an egg producer who really cares about their chickens.”

The film follows a chicken named “Cluck” from birth to its beginnings as a hen on the farm.

“I tried to keep it as neutral as possible,” Smithfield said. “The farmer said she doesn’t normally name the hens, but she named this one. Cluck was the sweetest little thing and ran up to me whenever I showed up.”

Smithfield obtained permission from a local news affiliate to use footage from a factory farm, so viewers could see how hens live on different types of farms. In addition to interviewing local farmer Charity Whitmer, she also interviewed the director of the Leaguetown Farmers Market and a representative from Egg Land Farms to educate viewers on the differences in the eggs produced.

“I was pretty impressed with Sunny’s questions and her professionalism during the production process,” Whitmer said. “She sent me a link to the film, and our whole family loved seeing our hard work come to life on the screen. I know Cluck is proud of her work, too.”

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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!

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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 printed thesaurus or dictionary. You may write in upstyle or downstyle.
5. Make sure you are within the prescribed count. Under no circumstances should you be under or over the maximum count. Judges are instructed not to consider 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
- use single quotes
- avoid using the same word twice in a headline
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations
- do not end the headline with a period or exclamation point

★ STORY #1

Club to host political ‘party’ 30

★ STORY #2

District receives donation 26
for rooftop solar panels 24

★ STORY #3

District considering 20
bus route changes 17
as cost-saving measure 22

★ STORY #4

Namaste Nina 12
Junior offers yoga classes 26
to raise money for trip 23

★ STORY #5

Life of Pie 11
Counselor wins baking trophy 28

★ STORY #6

Egg film produces gold medal 28