

Headline Writing

State 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 district said it will survey the community next week to assess support of a potential tax ratification measure to appear on a future ballot. Superintendent Khalil Jeffy said a small tax increase could increase teacher salaries and benefits.

“Our teachers have gone too long now without a substantial pay increase,” he said. “Before we put something like that on the ballot, the school board wants to reach out to the community and see how feasible a small tax increase would be.”

Participants will be called at random to take the survey, but all community members can complete the survey online on the district’s website by May 23.

“We already have some of the lowest taxes in the community,” PTA president Charla Potters said. “We haven’t had a tax increase in like 20 years. Hopefully our community can rally around our teachers and get them the raise they deserve.”

If the district decides to put the new tax ratification on the ballot, it would do so in the November election.

“We have the best teachers in Texas,” junior Kacie Brug said. “I hope our community recognizes that and agrees to pay them accordingly.”

Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 16-22

Students and staff scrambled for direction after a malfunctioning smoke detector triggered an alarm during passing period last Friday. Principal Eugene Fitzpatrick said the district will test the system next week to prevent future issues.

“If a fire alarm goes off when you’re in class, you know what to do,” junior Cindy Huang said. “But there were 3,000 people in the halls. It was a rush to find the nearest door. We didn’t know if we were supposed to find our second period teacher or third period. We didn’t know where to go once we got outside.”

In a typical fire drill, teachers accompany students out the nearest door, cross the street and take attendance on a physical sheet of paper. Since the alarm went off between classes, the procedure was unclear to some students and staff.

“My third period class was out front, but my second period class was out by the tennis courts,” junior Harvey Love said. “I didn’t want to go on a scavenger hunt to find them, so I just got in my car and drove home. I’m glad it wasn’t a real fire.”

Story 3 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 14-20

Members of the Key Club will partner with Leaguetown Food Assistance to provide free lunches for students this summer. More than 30% of students in the district rely on free or reduced-price lunches during the school year, but in the summer, students don’t always have access to healthy meals at home.

“Our club members will work with Leaguetown Food Assistance to put together sack lunches that students can come to school and pick up every day,” club president junior Joel Miller said. “We don’t require an ID or ask any questions. People can just come up and grab a lunch.”

Club members have been decorating paper lunch sacks with uplifting messages. Over the summer, they will work in shifts to put together meals and hand them out.

“This is one of my favorite projects we do,” sophomore Bella Bolton said. “I hate thinking that students who sit next to me on the bus or in class could be hungry over the summer. We’re going to do what we can to prevent that.”

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-14 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 14-20

Students in advanced engineering classes will put their work to the test Saturday when they join the Lone Star Racing Series with their newly built go-kart.

“We’ve been working on this all year,” senior Robert Brask said. “Now we’re ready to race. This thing is shockingly fast. The test runs have been amazing to watch.”

Brask and other students joining the class spent the summer working with engineering teacher Lucinda Sanchez to write to local car mechanics, vinyl design companies and companies with 3D printing technology to ask for donations. They also visited junkyards and looked online for second-hand parts.

“We didn’t want to just buy a kit and follow the instructions,” Sanchez said. “I’ve had these students for three years now. They were ready to design and build. Each element was specifically selected by students or made by hand. It’s the most authentic project my students have ever produced.”

The race will take place in the parking lot at the now-empty Grant Creek Mall, where 20 teams from high schools around Texas will race their hand-built go-karts.

“I’m mostly proud of the off-road wheels we found,” Brask said. “We put them on this weekend and completed the finishing touches on the paint job. Our kart is ready to race and ready to win.”

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

For junior Joy Whitney, Saturdays are for the dogs. Looking for a way to share her love for animals, Whitney started a club called Furr-ever Fun that works with local dog rescue groups and animal shelters to visit animals, walk them and play with them while they are waiting to be adopted.

“We specifically focus on animals that have been rescued from difficult situations,” she said. “The animals have been through so much. We try to show them that humans can be loving friends while rescue groups find their forever homes. There’s nothing like watching a dog go from cowering in the corner to wagging its tail with its tongue hanging out of its big old smile.”

Because many of the animals are afraid of humans, Whitney arranged for students to meet with an animal care expert to show them how to care for dogs that may have experienced trauma.

“These animals have spent most of their lives locked in a kennel, so they don’t see humans as friends, yet,” Whitney said. “After a few sessions playing with us, hopefully that changes, and the dogs will be more friendly and approachable when they’re ready for adoption.”

Story 6 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

After finishing a semester with their new food truck, culinary arts students have been invited to join the Memorial Day Food Truck Festival in Leaguetown Park. Students have planned a special sample menu that will include carnitas tacos, charcuterie on a stick and grilled veggie skewers.

“We’ve been working to perfect the menu for weeks now, ever since we were invited to the festival,” senior Chris Simpson said. “The grilled veggie skewers are my main focus. They’re marinated with lime and cumin, and we grill the squash, peppers and eggplant so they still have a nice crunch with that spicy and tangy flavor.”

At the festival, visitors will each receive one ticket to put in a jar to vote for their favorite food truck. The winner will receive \$2,000.

“I feel confident we have the potential to get the most votes and win the festival,” junior Marguerite Ramsey said. “We need a new vent hood and some decent serving tools. Then, I think we could use the truck to make some real money.”

Students have taken the food truck to athletic events and school dances, but this will be the first time for students to serve the general public.

“We’ve been practicing plating techniques and service with a smile,” Simpson said. “We’re used to selling to kids, but there will be real foodies at this festival, including food critics and food writers. We need them to vote for us. We’re going to give it everything we’ve got to try and win.”

State Meet • 2025
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

_____ *main headline*

_____ *secondary headline*

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

State Meet • 2025

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

Survey floats possible new tax 30

★ STORY #2

Unplanned fire alarm 20
causes confusion 16

★ STORY #3

Key Club members 16
help prepare lunches 20
during summer break 19

★ STORY #4

Keep It Wheel 13
Engineering class 17
to race new go-kart 19

★ STORY #5

Fetching Joy 12
Club cares for rescue dogs 26

★ STORY #6

Driven to Serve 15
Food truck invited to festival 30

HEADLINE WRITING

1A—Gracie White—Nazareth

1. Tax Survey to Estimate Support
2. Faulty fire alarm
Leads to system check
3. Students to receive
Free summer lunches
From new partnership
4. 'Driven' class
Engineering students
Construct go-kart
5. Critter club
Group enhances shelter life
6. Grub Gathering
Students showcase food truck

2A—Kale Cope--Lindsay

1. District to survey tax hikes
2. District tests alarms
after detector mishap
3. Club offers students
Free sack lunches
To fix summer hunger
4. Need for speed
Students enter kart
Into racing series
5. Dog Days
Junior opens pet care club
6. Meals on Wheels
Culinary joins food truck fest

3A—Spencer Buchanan—Buna

1. District to survey over taxes
2. Detector malfunctions
Triggers school chaos
3. Key club to partner
With LFA and provide
free student lunches
4. Pedal to metal
Engineering class to
Race new go-kart
5. Dog days
Junior starts animal club

6. Memorial munch
Culinary plans menu for festival

4A—Jamie Villarroel—Dallas School of Science and Engineering

1. Survey on tax increase to open
2. Smoke detectors to be
Tested following mania
3. Key Club to provide
Free decorated sack
Lunches this summer
4. Revved up
Engineering class
To race go-kart
5. Lend a paw
Club comforts rescue animals
6. The heat is on
Student food truck to vy for \$2k

5A—Nayah Macaambac—Gregory-Portland

1. District to survey community
2. District to test alarm
After malfunctions
3. Key Club, partner
To provide students
Free summer lunches
4. Ready, Set, Go
Student to race
Karts in contest
5. Fur Friends
Junior stars animal club
6. Trucks, tacos
Culinary aims to win food fest

6A—Hailey Gorzell—Schertz Clemens

1. District to conduct tax survey
2. District to run tests
After false fire alarm
3. Key Club, non-profit
to offer free summer
lunches for students
4. Go-kart goals
Engineering to race
Car in series Sat.
5. Furry Friend

Junior starts pet bond club

6. Food truck fare

Culinary prepares festival menu