

# Headline Writing

State Meet • 2018



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). Write main headlines on the top line and secondary headlines under the main headline. You have **45 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: 3-line headline with each line counting 14-20

The special education department is seeking student volunteers to help with the Masquerade Ball next Friday night. At least 40 students are needed to be dance partners and serve snacks.

“Many of our special ed students are shy and don’t engage without a little help,” department chair Holly Brandt said. “Last year, we had the cheerleaders dance with some of our kids, and it was a big hit.”

Junior Katelynn Harris said she helped last year and had a great time.

“I was exhausted by the end of the night,” she said. “I didn’t sit once the whole time. I am so glad Ms. Brandt is asking for more students. I am definitely helping again.”

Brandt said they expect about 75 students at the ball.

“We ask parents to stay at home for this event,” she said. “This is our kids’ prom. They need some independence from mom and dad.”

Senior Marcus Cash will be the DJ for the event.

“It’s my favorite event all year,” he said. “You feel a lot of love there.”

## Story 2 — Write: 1-line headline counting 16-32

Junior Evan Hao will travel to Washington, D.C., next Tuesday to compete in the finals of the Synopsys Science Contest. He will present his research on algorithms to determine hotspots for malaria.

If he wins, Hao will receive a \$30,000 scholarship.

“The competition at this level is incredible,” Hao said. “I am honored to have gotten this far. Winning the whole thing would be insane.”

Hao will compete against 24 other high school students from around the nation.

“There is one other student from Texas,” he said. “She’s from the Dallas area.”

Science teacher Eugene Preston said Hao is the first Leaguetown student to make it to the finals.

“This is huge, and Evan is only a junior,” Preston said. “His research is groundbreaking. He has a very good chance of winning it all.”

## Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 20-26

After receiving a \$15,000 donation, the athletic booster club moved the annual sports banquet from the school cafeteria to the Hilton Hotel.

“It’s definitely going to be a nicer event this year,” club president Benji White said. “We are encouraging the athletes to dress up.”

Football coach Pryor Bills said each athlete can bring three guests to the May 16 banquet.

“After the three free guests, we are charging \$20 a person,” he said.

Softball pitcher Gina Fuentes said she couldn’t believe the venue change.

“I am super-psyched,” she said. “In the past, the booster moms have tried to decorate the cafeteria, but there’s only so much you can do there. This is going to be nice.”

White said the banquet will start at 6 p.m.

“We have to do it during the week because our softball and baseball teams are in the playoffs during the weekend,” he said.

**Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 16-22**

Junior Brad Blem loves waffles.

In fact, it's only noon and Brad has already eaten five waffles.

"I eat blueberry waffles every morning, and then I pack three buttermilk waffles for lunch," he said. "I'd eat them every night for dinner if I could."

After droning on about waffles most of his high school career, Brad's friends told him he should create a waffle club so they wouldn't have to listen to his waffle talk anymore.

Brad didn't waffle on the suggestion, and last month he created the Waffle Club. The club already has 15 members.

"We meet in the culinary room so we have access to a kitchen," Brad said. "Of course, we eat waffles at every meeting."

Sophomore Layla Rush joined the club and loves it.

"I never thought I would meet another person who loves waffles as much as I do," she said. "This has been great."

Brad said the club plans to try out different recipes to perfect the waffle.

"Once we get a better batter, we are going to have a waffle breakfast fundraiser," he said.

**Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 18-24 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 22-28**

One torn ACL. Two sprained ankles. Three pulled hamstrings.

The injury list sounds like it's from a full-contact football game.

"You would have thought the students were tackling us, the way we kept going down," biology teacher Laurie Negris said.

But there were no tackles. In fact, no contact at all. It was the annual teachers vs. seniors kickball game.

"I guess we will have to rethink this game next year — or at least recruit younger teachers," Negris said.

English teacher Robyn Mario tore her ACL when she fell while running to first base.

"I am so embarrassed," she said. "I jog three miles every other day. I thought I was in good shape, but I guess not good enough to sprint 90 feet."

The annual kickball game is the final senior fundraiser for the year. Proceeds go to Project Graduation. This year, the event raised \$1,360.

"I suppose my sprained ankle was worth it," computer tech teacher Will Nguyen said. "At least we won. We have bragging rights as we hobble along the hallways."

For the record, the teachers won the game, 8-6.

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

The National Honor Society will host a Distracted Driver Summit from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Friday. Speakers will range from police officers to emergency room doctors and nurses.

"When students are driving, they should focus on driving — not texting, answering the phone or changing the radio station," NHS president Noelle Lawson said. "Last year, more than 2,000 teens died in car accidents involving distracted driving."

NHS will provide pizza for all attendees. Student sign-up is on government teacher Doria Smith's door.

"We are pushing for everyone to sign up ahead of time, so we have enough food," Lawson said.

Dr. Mina Shimaro, an emergency room physician, will speak Thursday evening.

"My suggestion for teens, and really everyone, is to put your phone in your trunk," she said. "That way if it rings or buzzes, you don't feel compelled to get it. Everyone can live without a phone for a little while. In fact, you may live a lot longer."

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

STATE • 2018

## 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. Pace yourself. You have about 7 1/2 minutes for each headline. Don't watch the clock but be aware of the time you are taking to complete a headline.
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, 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 feature headline. If it is a serious news story, write a serious headline.
7. Never sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
8. In a main/secondary headline, 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 clarifies, amplifies or emphasizes a significant aspect of the story.
9. The Associated Press 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
- avoid using names unless the name is well-known
- use single quotes
- avoid using the same word twice in a headline
- use active verbs
- try to write in present or future tense
- avoid unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms
- do not end the headline with a period
- separate two sentences in a headline with a semicolon.

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<b>A waffle lot of love</b>	20
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## ★ STORY #5

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