



# IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

## UIL Headline Writing

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*Presentation by Bobby Hawthorne, Jeanne Acton, Alyssa Boehringer and Jolene Taylor*



# THE HEADLINE CONTEST

**SIX STORIES WITH SIX HEADLINES**

**30 MINUTES (ABOUT 5 MIN PER STORY)**

**COUNT PARAMETERS**

**IT'S ALL ABOUT QUICK THINKING AND  
CREATIVITY**

# WHAT'S IN A GOOD HEADLINE?

## SELL THE STORY

We want people to read more.

## TELL THE FACTS

include specifics that tell the reader if they want to read the story.

## BE ACCURATE

Facts, names, numbers, anything must be correct. Double check spelling.

## BE OBJECTIVE

Don't editorialize.

## MAKE TONE FIT CONTENT

Serious story > serious headline.  
Silly story > silly headline.

# TWO TYPES OF STORIES YOU'LL SEE

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## STRAIGHT NEWS

Will have a 1-, 2- or 3-deck headline.

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## FEATURE

Usually has a main headline that can be creative with a secondary headline that explains the story.



# Headline Writing

State 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 26-32

A group of anonymous community members will surprise graduates with gift baskets beginning next week.

The Facebook group “Adopt-a-Grad Leaguetown” was created during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide a positive experience for seniors who wouldn’t have a traditional graduation. Parent of a 2020 graduate Laney Wilcox, who started the group in 2020, said the group’s mission has stayed the same.

“I created the group because I thought my daughter needed a pick-me-up,” she said. “Five years later, I still have community members wanting to adopt a senior.”

Parents submit information about their senior in the Facebook group, then community members “adopt” each student and provide a gift. The group also collects donations to provide gifts to seniors who are not selected.

“I remember my sister getting this big basket on our porch when she graduated in 2021,” senior Hailey Garcia said. “She got a fancy water bottle and a bunch of gift cards. I’m glad Leaguetown parents are keeping it going. What a way to celebrate.”

## Story 2 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 26-32

Seniors will receive a new class rank Friday after the district discovered an error in the system that tabulates GPA.

“When we got our final class rank notification, something didn’t look right,” senior Johnathan Dharamraj said. “I went from No. 6 in the class to No. 7. And I’m positive I was supposed to be 6. It just wasn’t what I thought it would be.”

Dharamraj calculated his GPA manually and went to tell registrar Joanie Morgan that the report was incorrect.

“Johnathan showed me his calculations,” Morgan said. “For some reason, the system added extra courses to his schedule that were shown as ‘incomplete.’ This brought down his GPA. I had never seen it do anything like that before.”

Morgan then realized the system had wrongly calculated more than 120 seniors’ grades in the final class rank report.

“I hope it doesn’t cause too many more problems,” she said. “At least I hope the top 10 in the class don’t move around too much more.”

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

To improve teacher recruitment, the district will launch a new program for future teachers in the fall. Through the “Teach for Tomorrow” program, the district will pay for high school graduates to earn a degree in education as long as they come back to teach for the district.

“It’s time to get creative,” Superintendent Felicia Spaulding said. “We’re through using COVID as our excuse for poor teacher retention and recruitment.”

Students can earn a degree in elementary or secondary education while working in an apprenticeship with a teacher. After completing the program, teachers will be required to teach for the district for a minimum of three years or pay back the district for the cost of the degree.

“This is a way for us to not only have more teachers, but also to have better teachers, more prepared teachers and teachers who already love their school,” Spaulding said. “They’ll be going back to teach in their home district.”

## Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 10-16 and 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 20-26

After thunderstorms caused three postponements, administrators announced Thursday they would not reschedule Reading Fest for a fourth time.

The 12th Annual Reading Fest, originally scheduled for May 3, was an outdoor event with author meet-and-greets, book-related games, food and book exchanges for elementary, middle and high school students.

“We were very sorry to finally cancel the event,” Principal Joe Healy said. “As we head into the end of the year, there aren’t enough days on the calendar to continuously reschedule events like this. We are too close to AP testing and graduation at this point.”

For the past 12 years, student council and the high school English department have helped organize the event at the school’s practice field on a Friday in the spring. Heavy rain and lightning on May 3 and 6, as well as a tornado watch on May 10, led administrators to cancel the event.

“We’ve spent the past six weeks creating decorations and planning the games for the elementary students,” senior Mario Sosa said. “I guess we’ll save these materials for next year’s festival. Hopefully that one won’t get rained out, too.”

## Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 8-14 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

Glee, which includes the top-level choir seniors, will perform a concert entirely of Beatles music in the auditorium at 6 p.m. Friday.

Tickets for the concert cost \$5, which will go to benefit the choir program and its 2025 senior trip.

“We’ve been secretly practicing these Beatles songs all year,” Glee leader Tabitha Soren said. “I wasn’t a huge fan before this, but my parents were. I’m definitely a fan now. I have an amazing solo during ‘Golden Slumbers,’ and I can’t wait for everyone to hear it. Getting to know these songs has changed my outlook on popular music.”

The Beatles were a popular band in the 1960s whose popularity at the time is often compared to modern pop artists like Taylor Swift.

“I can see where a lot of Taylor Swift’s popular songs are influenced by the writing of Paul McCartney and John Lennon,” senior Devin Menendez said. “I have loved learning about them and making those connections.”

The group will perform eight Beatles songs, including “Penny Lane,” “With a Little Help From My Friends” and “Let It Be.” The group also watched several Beatles documentaries to learn the history and hear more of the music before selecting songs for the concert.

“I took the Glee seniors to a summer retreat in June, and we were sitting around a campfire one night talking about music when I realized these kids don’t even know The Beatles,” choir director Brook Lawrence said. “I can understand that they’re a little older than some of the music the students listen to, but The Beatles are our history. I decided it was my job to train them up.”

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

AP students will host an after-school study session May 14 to prepare students for the biology, chemistry, statistics and Calculus AB and BC tests. The event, which will be 4-8 p.m., will have food trucks and multiple teachers on hand for tutoring.

“I asked Mr. McHam if I could plan a massive study group for all the AP science tests,” senior Jennifer Choi said. “He was like ‘sure,’ but then my friend who was taking Stats wanted to be included, too. So we just decided to invite almost everyone. It’s still a study session, though — no music or games or anything like that.”

In addition to arranging food trucks, the PTA donated gift cards as door prizes for students who attend the session. The event will take place in the cafeteria.

“Every 30 minutes, they’re going to give away a gift card,” chemistry teacher Bruce McHam said. “Hopefully that will keep students there and keep them focused on getting through this material.”

Choi and McHam have divided the cafeteria into different sections for students to visit to get help on their various study materials.

“I’m grateful to Mr. McHam for helping me plan this,” Choi said. “It’s going to be fun, I think, but I just need to catch up on the last few units in chemistry and Calculus BC. I need to do well on these tests and get some college credit. I think the session can get me there.”



## STORY 2 — WRITE: 2-LINE HEADLINE WITH EACH LINE COUNTING 26-32

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# THINGS TO KNOW

**DON'T GO OVER COUNT**

**DON'T SPLIT INFINITIVES**

**DON'T DUPLICATE WORDS**

**DON'T USE ARTICLES (A, THE)**

**DO NOT END A HEADLINE WITH A PERIOD**

**AVOID NAMES UNLESS THEY ARE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE**

**USE SINGLE QUOTES IN HEADLINES**

**TRY TO SUMMARIZE THE STORY AND ELIMINATE  
UNNECESSARY WORDS**



## STORY 2 — WRITE: 2-LINE HEADLINE WITH EACH LINE COUNTING 26-32

The district will recalculate students' grades and class ranks - 62  
because a student found an error in how they were calculating grades. - 69

# STAY IN COUNT

■ 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



# STAY IN COUNT

■ 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	
S	e	n	i	o	r	s	_	t	o	_	r	e	c	e	i	v	e	_	n	e	w	_	r	a	n	k	s	_	_	_	_	_
F	r	i	d	a	y	_	a	f	t	e	r	_	G	P	A	_	m	i	s	c	a	l	c	u	l	a	t	i	o	n	_	_

**JULIA MONTGOMERY, LINDALE HS  
4A STATE CHAMPION**

# THE FEATURE STORIES

**YOU'LL HAVE A MAIN HEADLINE AND A  
SECONDARY HEADLINE**

**THE MAIN HEADLINE CAN BE CREATIVE**

**THE SECONDARY HEADLINE IS A  
SEPARATE THOUGHT ENTIRELY. THEY DO  
NOT CONNECT.**



## STORY 5 — WRITE: 1-LINE MAIN HEADLINE COUNTING 14-20 AND A 2-LINE SECONDARY HEADLINE COUNTING 20-26

Junior Ellie Lantos sits on the floor of her closet to work, but she's not there to fold laundry. For the past year, Lantos has been writing poetry on the walls of her closet. On April 29, those words will be published in a book.

"I started writing in my closet last year, and in August I realized I probably had enough solid pieces that I wanted them to become available for the world," Lantos said. "The poems are mainly about my life and some of the struggles I've had but also about some of the things I really love — like sunflowers, pizza and writing."

Lantos raised half the money to publish her book of poetry, and her parents agreed to contribute the other half as a birthday present when she turned 17.

"She was almost finished with everything by the time she shared her work with me," Lantos' mother, Rose Lantos, said. "I'm so proud of her for using her writing as a skill to not only process her own emotions but also to share her voice with the world. I'm ready to buy my own copy as soon as it comes out."

The poetry collection, titled "Wall About Me," will be on Amazon for \$7.99.

"I'm excited for people I know and even people I've never met to see a small piece of me," Lantos said. "If we ever move out of this house, I'm not sure what I'm going to do. Maybe my closet will be worth something one day."

# STAY IN COUNT

#### ■ 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
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*main headline*

*secondary headline*

# STAY IN COUNT

## ■ 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
W	r	i	t	i	n	g	_	o	n	_	t	h	e	_	w	a	l	l	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
<i>main headline</i>																															
J	u	n	i	o	r	_	p	u	b	l	i	s	h	e	s	_	p	o	e	t	r	y	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
<i>secondary headline</i>																															
u	s	i	n	g	_	c	l	o	s	e	t	_	a	s	_	m	a	n	_	v	s	c	r	i	p	t	_	_	_	_	_



# KINDS OF HEADLINES

## 1-LINE HEADLINE

Dr. Seuss, man of rhyme and reason, dies at 87

**LOOK AT THE TENSE...**

# KINDS OF HEADLINES

## 2-LINE HEADLINE

Halloween scares up snow  
across much of Panhandle



# KINDS OF HEADLINES

## 3-LINE HEADLINE

Pianist keeps  
city's singers  
in good tune

# KINDS OF HEADLINES

## MAIN/SECONDARY

### **Fiddling with success**

Junior to release album Friday

# HEADLINE TIPS

**BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.  
GET TO THE HEART OF THE NEWS.**

School board discusses items  
at heated Tuesday meeting

(not good)



# HEADLINE TIPS

2 board members walk out  
over budget argument

(better, more specific)

# HEADLINE TIPS

**TRY TO PUT THE SUBJECT AND VERB ON THE SAME LINE. KEEP ADJECTIVES AND NOUNS TOGETHER. KEEP INFINITIVES TOGETHER.**

District offers  
free vaccinations  
to limit absences

(notice phrases on the same line,  
especially tricky with short lines)

# HEADLINE TIPS

**TRY TO PUT THE SUBJECT AND VERB ON THE  
SAME LINE. KEEP ADJECTIVES AND NOUNS  
TOGETHER. KEEP INFINITIVES TOGETHER.**

Fire guts Fred Astaire  
Dance Studio, 2 injured

(not good)



# HEADLINE TIPS

**TRY TO PUT THE SUBJECT AND VERB ON THE SAME LINE. KEEP ADJECTIVES AND NOUNS TOGETHER. KEEP INFINITIVES, PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES TOGETHER.**

Baseball team ready for  
playoff game, coach says

(not good)

# HEADLINE TIPS

**DON'T USE THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL OR  
TOO MANY INITIALS OR UNNEEDED DATES**

2024 MHS FFA helps  
with annual WCC event

(too vague)

# HEADLINE TIPS

**AVOID BE VERBS AND LINKING VERBS. USE  
PRESENT OR FUTURE TENSE.**

Seniors will prank  
Friday pep rally

Seniors **to** prank  
Friday pep rally



# HEADLINE TIPS

**NO ARTICLES. (A, AN, THE)**

Junior makes the science  
finals in D.C.

Junior makes science finals in  
D.C.

**USE A COMMA INSTEAD OF AND.**

# HEADLINE TIPS

Heat wave blisters California, Texas

# HEADLINE TIPS

## AVOID OVERUSED CLICHÉS

Swimmers dive into season

Golfers swing into action

Math Club multiplies

Football team tackles opposition



# HEADLINE TIPS

**DO NOT REPEAT KEY WORDS AND PHRASES  
FROM THE MAIN TO THE SECONDARY.**

**Pocket lasers banned**  
Authorities ban laser pointers

**Pocket lasers banned**  
Principal cites injuries,  
class disruptions

# HEADLINE TIPS

## AVOID HEADLINE-ESE

Bball team destroys West in finals

Senior play to continue thru Easter

Principal to dance at Friday nite game

# HEADLINE TIPS

## USE ACTIVE VOICE

Yuck:

Obstacle course was run  
in record time by senior

Better:

Senior sets record  
on obstacle course

# HEADLINE TIPS

**CAN SEPARATE TWO SENTENCES WITH A SEMICOLON.**

Seniors fill principal's office with frogs;  
juniors leave ducks in counselors' area

(not the best)



**OOPSIES**

**Bears capture playoff birth**

**Forecasters call for weather Monday**

**Mississippi's literacy program  
shows improvement**



**Be sure to eat  
right before surgery**

**Mansfield**

**County spelling  
bee postponed  
one more time**

The Richland County Spelling Bee that had been rescheduled for Thursday at the Mid-Ohio Conference Center in Columbus has been postponed again.

BY  
Ne

blis  
th

# DIANA WAS STILL ALIVE HOURS BEFORE SHE DIED

A SERIES of previously unseen CCTV images have revealed that Diana was alive and well before she was tragically killed in Paris, ten years ago.





THV11

2d ·



"He is a shining example of hard work and dedication."



thv11.com

**Arkansas teen scores perfect 36 on ACT while balancing football**



Like



Comment



Send



Share



# HOW TO WIN

## COUNTING COUNTS

Do not go over or under count on any headline. Draw the lines so the judges can see.

## FOLLOW THOSE RULES

Don't split phrases. Leave articles out. Single quotes.

## TELL THE FACTS

Make sure you get the news in the headline. Don't be distracted by cleverness.

## USE TIME WISELY

If you can't finish a headline, go on to the next one and come back to it.

## DO BE CLEVER THOUGH

A clever feature headline can set you apart from the rest



**LET'S TALK ABOUT  
JUDGING HEADLINES**



# IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

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