

News Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2019



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 2,300 students enrolled in grades 9-12. In March, superintendent Raul Leal announced a proposal to hire Blanket Security to train all faculty and staff for an active shooter emergency. The training would simulate a school shooting and teach school personnel what they should or should not do. The training also would take place over two days — one day of simulation and one day of classroom work about the simulation. Leal said schools would receive the training when teachers and staff returned to school in late summer.

The cost for the training is \$42,000 for all campuses.

The Leaguetown Police Department offered to do a training at the schools for free. Leal declined the offer, stating the department has no experience in active shooter scenarios, and Blanket Security staffs former FBI agents and has done more than 100 trainings nationwide.

Leal will present his proposal to the school board Wednesday, March 20. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, March 18.

■ RAUL LEAL, superintendent

“Blanket Security has been endorsed by the FBI and the U.S. Department of Education. I can’t think of better endorsements. Yes, it is expensive, but can we put a price tag on our students’ lives? I went to Taylorville High School to watch part of the training there. I was impressed. The company puts on a full-blown active shooter scene. They even bring in actors to be the students. I talked with several faculty members after the two-day training, and they all said it was hands-down the best training they have ever had.

“I am sure the local police department could do sufficient training, but I want more than sufficient. I want our staff to be prepared by the best. Blanket Security has an entire team that only does this type of training. That’s it. That’s their entire focus. That’s the expertise we need. Let’s be real. Our police officers have very little experience dealing with any type of shooting situation. And I am grateful for that. I am glad our town is safe and peaceful, but I don’t think our officers are the best to train our staff.”

■ ARLENE CLAY, president of the PTA

“The PTA supports this proposal. The simple fact is, our schools are no longer the safest places. Our teachers and staff need this training to be prepared for the unthinkable. The local police department’s offer is kind, but we need the best training out there. Blanket Security has received incredible reviews from around the nation.”

■ HARRY WEISS, police chief

“My officers have all been to Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERT) at least once. Several officers, including myself, have attended the training twice so that we could become trainers. I have seven certified trainers in my department. I am sure Blanket Security has a great program, but it’s costly. If the superintendent wants to save money, we could do the training for free. We also could do a training for the students.”

■ BO REYNOLDS, junior and Student Council officer

“The Student Council is not thrilled about the cost of this training. We agree our school needs to get trained, but we are confused on why we don’t use our local police department. That would be free. The Student Council has asked for several improvements on campus, like more tables in the cafeteria and benches in the courtyard. We always are told, ‘There’s no money.’ If there is no money to buy needed items — we don’t have enough seating for everyone at lunch — then where is the superintendent getting the money for this training? Maybe if the superintendent can find the money for this, he can find the money to improve some things on campus.”

■ FRANNIE FORWARD, sophomore

“I guess the teachers need to be trained for this, but it does sound kind of expensive. I don’t like thinking about this kind of stuff. It’s depressing.”

■ NATASHA PUTNEY, history teacher

“I understand where Dr. Leal is coming from. We can’t skimp on this training. I have a friend who teaches in Taylorville, and she said the Blanket Security training is great. She feels more prepared and safer now. Teachers need to feel safe, and so do students. We need to find the best training, and if Blanket Security is it, we should go for it.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Blanket Security can do a one-day student training, but that would add \$24,000 to the bill.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

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NEWS WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE STORY

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 judge.

1. Open with a future lead under the present circumstances. In this instance, the school board will vote on the active shooter training proposal.

Teachers and staff will receive a two-day training on active shooter situations if the school board approves Superintendent Raul Leal's proposal Wednesday. The training, provided by Blanket Security, would cost \$42,000 for all campuses and would take place when faculty and staff return to school in late summer.

2. Use direct quotes and get those quotes early in the story. After you introduce quotes, use the transition/quote formula. Be sure you attribute after the quote. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Leal said," not "said Leal.") Avoid stacking quotes. Avoid putting two or more quotes from different people together without placing a transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the action of the story and the quote does not repeat information revealed in the transition.

transition

The local police department offered to do training at the schools for free, but Leal declined the offer.

direct quote

"Our police officers have very little experience dealing with any type of shooting situation," Leal said. "And I am grateful for that. I am glad our town is safe and peaceful, but I don't think our officers are the best to train our staff."

transition

Police chief Harry Weiss said his officers participated in Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) last year.

direct quote

"Several officers, including myself, have attended the training twice so that we could become trainers," Weiss said. "I have seven certified trainers in my department. I am sure Blanket Security has a great program, but it's costly."

3. Use third person. Don't say "our students" or "Our superintendent Raul Leal" or "Some of our students..." Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say "The students are so angry..." without attributing that quote to someone or "The school should ..." These statements are personal opinions and cannot be made in a news story.

4. Note how in the earlier example of transition/quote, each quote is its own paragraph. Don't be afraid to use one and two-sentence paragraphs. Journalistic writing consists mostly of one and two-sentence paragraphs.

SAMPLE STORY

Teachers and staff will receive a two-day training on active shooter situations if the school board approves Superintendent Raul Leal's proposal Wednesday. The training, provided by Blanket Security, would cost \$42,000 for all campuses and would take place when faculty and staff return to school in late summer.

"Blanket Security has been endorsed by the FBI and the U.S. Department of Education," Leal said. "I can't think of better endorsements. Yes, it is expensive, but can we put a price tag on our students' lives?"

The local police department offered to do training at the schools for free, but Leal declined the offer.

"Our police officers have very little experience dealing with any type of shooting situation," Leal said. "And I am grateful for that. I am glad our town is safe and peaceful, but I don't think our officers are the best to train our staff."

Police chief Harry Weiss said his officers participated in Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) last year.

"Several officers, including myself, have attended the training twice so that we could become trainers," Weiss said. "I have seven certified trainers in my department. I am sure Blanket Security has a great program, but it's costly."

The PTA supports the training, PTA president Arlene Clay said.

"Our teachers and staff need this training to be prepared for the unthinkable," Clay said. "The local police department's offer is kind, but we need to best training out there."

Bo Reynolds, junior and Student Council officer, said the StuCo agrees the school needs training in this area but is concerned about the cost.

"We always are told, 'There's no money,'" he said. "If there is no money to buy needed items — we don't have enough seating for everyone at lunch — then where is the superintendent getting the money for this training?"

Leal said he was impressed when he went to watch Blanket Security's training at Taylorville High School.

"The company puts on a full-blown active shooter scene," Leal said. "They even bring in actors to be the students. I talked with several faculty members after the two-day training, and they all said it was hands-down the best training they have ever had."

History teacher Natasha Putney said she has a friend who teaches in Taylorville and her friend feels more prepared and safer after their training with Blanket Security.

"Teachers need to feel safe, and so do students," Putney said. "We need to find the best training, and if Blanket Security is it, we should go for it."



Yippee!! You're the director of the journalism contests. To make your life a little easier...

WE HAVE ENCLOSED:

- The contests
- Judging criteria
- A statement to the judges
- A statement to the contestants
- Contest Tips. (Provides examples of how stories/heads should have been written and a sample story. Clip a copy to each entry to provide immediate feedback.)

NOW, YOU NEED TO:

- Make certain you have read the journalism section of the *UIL Journalism Handbook*. You can download it free from the UIL website at: http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism_Handbook_2018-19.pdf.
- Inventory the contest packet. Hopefully, there won't be any problems. If you find one, please call it to my attention. Call me at work at 512/232-4924, home at 512/740-3463 or e-mail me at jacton@uiltexas.org.
- **READ THE ENCLOSED STATEMENT TO YOUR JUDGES.**
Discuss the judging criteria and clarifications with the judges.
- **Do not give the tips to students.**
- Share the "Tips" with the judges (**BEFORE** they judge) and clip one copy to each contestant's entry **AFTER JUDGING**. Judges should write directly on EVERY student's entry and then attach one copy of the Contest Tips to each entry.
- Thanks and good luck!

Statement to Judges

JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

Please copy and distribute the following statement to the judges

1. Divide papers among the judges.
2. Every paper **MUST** be read and edited by at least one judge. *No paper should EVER be returned without written comments.*
3. Every judge does not have to read every paper. Strive for two readings for each paper. A third reading may be necessary for papers that contend for placing in the top six.
4. Avoid sarcasm or unduly harsh criticism. Remember: these are high school students, not professionals.
5. Please review the “Tips” for each contest. This sheet is consistent with the contest manual and what has been taught at conferences.
6. Realize that the UIL style may differ slightly from what you have been taught, what you practice or your newspaper’s style. If you have serious disagreement, please take them up with the UIL office, not the contestants or the meet director. For example, in the news, feature and editorial writing contests, it is not necessary to identify the school, Leaguetown High School. We create this contest as if students attend Leaguetown High School. Therefore, we assume high school students know the name of their school. Also, since AP style constantly changes, watch simply for writers to follow a consistent style. Some students (and newspapers) prefer addressing people with Mr./Mrs./Ms. title on second and subsequent uses.
7. In the Feature Writing contest, students have the freedom to develop scenes as they feel the scenes *may* have existed. The scenes must be a natural extension of the story. Please read “Contest tips” before judging.
8. In the editorial writing contest, students have the freedom to propose solutions or suggest answers they feel might resolve the problem. They do not have to be those proposed on the fact sheet. Also, they are urged to write in third person, but they may use first person plural on occasion.
9. In the headline writing contest: the main deck of a main/secondary headline combination may contain but does not need a verb. For example:

Out of Air

Statement to the Contestants

JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

Please read the following statement to contestants

1. Place your number in the upper right hand corner of each page of your entry. Do not put your name or your school's name on any part of the contest entry. If you do, you may be disqualified.
2. Write on one side of the paper only. Write legibly. This is a request, not a requirement.
3. It is suggested that you double space so judges may edit and write comments more extensively on your entry. This is a request, not a requirement.
4. You may use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus (bound or electronic) during News, Editorial, Feature and Headline contest. You may also use an AP stylebook. You may not use a journalism text or other textbook. No resources are allowed during the Copy Editing contest.
5. You may not talk during the contest. If you have a question, raise your hand and the contest monitor will come to you.
6. If you use a computer, you are responsible should it malfunction. You will have the remaining time to complete the contest in longhand, but you will not be given extra time. You must complete the print command before the monitor asks everyone to quit writing. If the computer malfunctions do not make noise trying to fix it. The monitor will ask you to leave if you are causing too much commotion. You may not use a computer in the Headline Writing contest or the Copy Editing contest.
7. Make sure all of your electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, etc.) are turned off. You may be disqualified for disrupting the contest if your devices go off.
8. When you are finished, please turn in your paper and quietly exit.

Good luck.



JUDGING CRITERIA

SPRING MEET JOURNALISM CONTESTS

In an effort to standardize judging procedures statewide, the League office has compiled a list of journalism contest judging guidelines. This list of guidelines will be included in each district and regional contest packet and will be available to State Meet contest judges. It is the responsibility of each journalism contest director to see that all contest judges are familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.

■ HEADLINE WRITING (30 minutes) NEW TIME FOR 2019!

1. Within count. **Note:** All letters, digits, punctuation marks, spaces, grammatical marks count as one (1).
2. Wording specific, accurate; unnecessary wording omitted.
3. Verb needed in main, secondary or both decks. At times, though, a verb is not necessary in both the main and secondary head.
4. Emphasis on active verbs.
5. Past tense avoided.
6. Split phrases (modifiers, verbs) avoided.
7. Redundancy in wording avoided.
8. Does not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
9. Main headlines not dependent on secondary headlines.
10. Secondary headlines emphasize significant aspect of news.
11. Grammar, spelling, punctuation correct.
 - A. It is permissible to use upstyle (ALL CAPS) or downstyle headlines.
 - B. Students need not complete all six headlines to win. It is possible that five good headlines will win over six mediocre ones, or four excellent heads will win over six poor headlines. The final decision rests with the judges, but no contestants shall be disqualified solely on the basis of not completing all six headlines.

■ EDITORIAL WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Introduction presents problem, provides staff stance.
2. Lead grabs reader's attention.
3. Evidence provided to support stance taken.
4. Direct quotes avoided unless absolutely necessary.
5. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
6. Other viewpoints presented and evidence is shown to refute those viewpoints.
7. Conclusion recaps staff position and contains call to action and/or solution.
8. Third person emphasized, although first person plural may be used occasionally.
9. Editorial tone fair, mature.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ FEATURE WRITING (60 minutes)

1. Lead grabs reader's attention and fits mood of story. It is permissible for students to set a scene for the feature prompt. The scene may include details that are not in the prompt.
2. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
3. Slang, clichés, jargon avoided.
4. Facts presented in logical sequence.
5. Smooth transitions.
6. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
7. Persons identified fully, accurately.
8. Feature theme fully developed.
9. Utilizes time peg (if necessary)
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ NEWS WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Sound news judgment in lead selection.
2. Facts presented in descending order of importance.
3. Information flows. Smooth transitions.
4. People identified fully, accurately.
5. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
6. Extraneous information omitted; writing tight.
7. Wording active.
8. All news questions answered. Newspaper style incorporated.
9. Editorialization avoided.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ STYLE/TITLES

- ✓ Newspaper style includes the option of using titles of Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. with names of adults. Students should be identified fully at first mention and by last name thereafter (1st use - senior Jeanne Acton; second and subsequent uses - Acton or Ms. Acton). It is permissible to use first names only on the second reference in feature stories. AP style calls for adults to be identified by full name at first mention, and then with appropriate title and last name thereafter. Be aware of deviations from AP style. If a contestant is consistent in the use of their style, it is not recommended you penalize the contestant for not following strict AP style. We ask that you look for consistency and understandability in the use of a contestant's style.

■ SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Journalistic proficiency shall be the standard by which entries are judged. In papers of similar journalistic quality, secondary considerations of grammar, spelling and neatness may be used to determine contest results. The contest does not intend, however, to test grammar or spelling skills, and each entry should be judged on its journalistic merit before other considerations come into play.

■ COPY EDITING (15 minutes) NEW CONTEST FOR 2019

- ✓ A key to the Copy Editing Contest will be included with your material. Part III is graded only to break ties.