

Headline Writing

District 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: 2-line headline with each line counting 22-28

After selling cupcakes, bumper stickers and spirit badges, the varsity cheerleaders still are short \$750 to fund their new uniforms for the 2018-19 school year.

“We are going to have to think of at least one more fundraiser,” cheerleader sponsor Riley Smith said. “Maybe we will do a car wash. But whatever we do, we have to do it fast if we want the uniforms by the fall.”

District policy prohibits cheerleaders from buying uniforms.

“The policy is for all athletics and is to prevent parents from having to spend any more money,” Principal Sally Sutherland said.

The cheerleaders have not had new uniforms in five years, said cheerleader captain Meagan Brockmeyer.

“Our current uniforms are so dated,” Brockmeyer, a junior, said. “It’s really disappointing that we haven’t raised enough money yet, but we are not giving up. We need these new uniforms.”

Story 2 — Write: 3-line headline with each line counting 10-17

Spanish teacher Joy Raja surprised her Spanish IV students with a guest speaker on Friday — Gabriel Soto, a famous Mexican soap opera actor. He is Raja’s second cousin.

“He was so hot,” senior Heather Nied said. “He only spoke to us in Spanish, but I understood almost everything he said.”

Raja’s class watches Mexican soap operas to help them with their Spanish.

“The students had no idea that Gabriel was my cousin,” she said. “I know many of the girls had a crush on him, but he’s happily married with four kids.”

Junior Bella Moreno said she almost couldn’t speak when she saw Soto at the front of the room.

“I was star-struck,” she said. “Then he started talking, and he’s so laid back and normal. He let us ask him anything we wanted as long as we asked him in Spanish.”

Raja said she was impressed with how well her students did with the questions.

“I thought the girls might ask silly questions about his hair and if he works out, but they didn’t,” she said. “They asked him about Mexico, being an actor and even about U.S.-Mexico relations.”

Story 3 — Write: 2-line headline with each line counting 18-24

To help save the Monarch butterflies, students from Ron Hunter’s Biology II classes are making small clay balls with milkweed plant seeds inside. The students will spread the balls throughout the campus garden beds and the walking trail surrounding the school next week.

“Our Monarch butterfly population has been dwindling here for the past few years,” Hunter said. “When I started at the high school 10 years ago, we had swarms of the butterflies in the spring. Last year, I saw two.”

After sharing his concerns with his classes, senior Rachel Brown researched what students could do to help save the butterflies.

“Monarch butterflies only lay their eggs on milkweed, and caterpillars only eat milkweed,” Brown said. “But humans don’t seem to like milkweed very much and are cutting it down for various reasons.”

Reed’s Garden Supply donated the seeds for the project.

Story 4 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 14-20 and a 2-line secondary headline with each line counting 18-24

The Student Council camping trip last week was anything but relaxing.

In the middle of the night, students awoke to a pack of coyotes strolling through the camp.

“I thought I heard a child crying,” senior Will Crawley said. “I peeked out of the tent, and there was a coyote inches from my face. In fact, there were like 10 coyotes sniffing around.”

Crawley said everyone in his tent woke shortly after him.

“We all tried to stay really quiet and texted the students in the other tents,” he said. “We wanted everyone to zip up their tents to keep safe.”

Junior Trina Evanton said she was “totally freaked out” by the coyotes.

“We quietly zipped up our tent, but it was wide open when Will texted us,” she said. “I didn’t sleep the rest of the night.”

Park Ranger Steve Rumble said Overton Preserve, where the students were camping, has an abundance of coyotes, but no one to his knowledge has ever been bitten or attacked by a coyote.

“Coyotes are quite timid around people,” Rumble said. “If one of the students had come out of the tent, I am sure they would have run away. It’s spring. The coyotes were probably looking for food.”

Story 5 — Write: 1-line main headline counting 18-24 and a 1-line secondary headline counting 26-32

For years, culinary arts teacher Janie Refugio has claimed her school kitchen is haunted.

“Every time we go into the kitchen, food items and utensils are moved around,” she said. “I’ve asked the custodians, and they never move things on our counters. I hate being alone in the kitchen now.”

The latest incident happened last Friday, she said.

“I left the crepes on the counter near the sink and went out to do hall duty,” she said. “I locked the kitchen when I left, and no one went in. But when I returned, the crepes were on the counter by the refrigerator.”

Refugio said she’s tired of people calling her “crazy” for saying the kitchen is haunted.

“My husband is installing a camera in the kitchen this week,” she said. “I will finally be able to prove to everyone that I am not delusional.”

Junior Ship Delroy said he has had an experience with utensils moving.

“I was baking a cake the other day, and when I went to the refrigerator to get the eggs, my mixing spoon was on the floor,” he said. “It’s a metal spoon. I would have heard it if it had fallen. It’s weird, but I think Mrs. Refugio is right. The kitchen is haunted.”

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

For at least six weeks, the classes in the 200 hallway will be moved to outside portables while the district removes moldy ceiling tiles. The seven classes will begin using the portables on Monday after electricity lines are connected.

“Our leaky roof is to blame for the mold,” Principal Sally Sutherland said. “We hope it’s just ceiling tiles. If it’s more, then our students might be in those portables for the rest of the school year.”

Science teacher Hal Plucker said he noticed mold in the tiles a few weeks ago.

“I wasn’t surprised,” he said. “Every time it rains, our ceiling leaks.”

Junior Tristen Cooper said he’s bummed about the move to portables because his teacher won’t be able to bring all of the computers.

“There aren’t enough plugs,” Cooper said. “We are going to have to partner for my computer tech class. That’s tough because we all have individual projects.”

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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!

DISTRICT • 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.

★ STORY #1

Cheerleaders seeking ways	25
to pay for new uniforms	23

★ STORY #2

Teacher surprises	17
Spanish class	13
with soap star	14

★ STORY #3

Class spreading seeds	21
to help save butterflies	24

★ STORY #4

In-tents experience	19
Students on camping trip	24
awake to pack of coyotes	24

★ STORY #5

Giving her the crepes	21
Kitchen haunted, teacher says	29

★ STORY #6

7 classes to move to portables	30
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