

# Headline Writing

2011 KSPA State Competition

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## Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your news publication is a monthly, with your final issue of the year slated for distribution on May 20, but you also have a website where your staff posts breaking news and other timely stories. Your editor has asked you to write headlines for five stories, two that will appear online, and three that will appear in the next print edition, in two weeks.

## School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School  
Location: Aspera, Kansas  
Mascot: Box Turtles  
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)  
School Colors: Green & Gold  
Yearbook: The Honeybee  
Newspaper: The Star

## Contest Info

This is a **carry-in** contest.

Please attach **your assigned contest number** in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your entry.

**Do not** put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.

## Assignment

You are to write a headline for each of the five attached stories provided. Headlines #1 and #2 will be straight sentence-style news headlines for the Web (immediate publication), headlines #3 and #4 will be sentence-style headlines for print (delayed publication) and headline #5 will be a feature headline using a title-style teaser laid out above an explanatory sentence-style subheadline. Headlines should be computer-generated and must fit the required space. All headlines should be printed on an 8.5- by 11-inch sheet of paper.

*Example Title-Style: **Lady HaHa***

*Example Sentence-Style: Campus comedienne breaks up lunchtime crowd*

## Specifications

**Headlines #1:** Write a 24-point Arial headline, 6 inches wide, with only one line for Story #1. This will run on your website.

**Headline #2:** Write a 24-point Arial bold headline, 6 inches wide, with only one line for Story #2. Under that headline, write a 12-point Arial sub-headline, that will give the reader more context about Story #2. This will run on your website.

**Headline #3:** Write an 30-point Times headline, 8 inches wide, one line long for Story #3. This will run in the print edition of The Star.

**Headline #4:** Write a 18-point Times headline, 4 inches wide, two lines long, for Story #4, which is an opinion piece.

**Headline #5:** Write a feature headline, 8 inches wide by 2.5 inches high for Story #5. The headline may incorporate graphics, art or other treatments to reflect current design trends for feature heads. You may use color for this headline only. Below the final design, indicate typeface(s) used and include a rationale for choosing the design and the font.



## Story #1

The Box Turtle baseball team defeated Virgin Valley this morning 8-2 in the first round of the McLovin Memorial Classic Baseball Tournament at the John Brown Baseball Complex in Aspera.

Zach Hochevar's pitching and a four-run third inning, in which nine Box Turtles batted, boosted Ad Astra. Ryan Nolan and Gordon Alexander each had two-run singles in the big inning.

Virgin Valley closed to within 5-2 in the fifth, but Virgin Valley errors allowed three Box Turtles to score in the sixth, salting away the game for AAHS, which improved its season record to 12-4. Hochevar's record sits at 11-0.

"With Zach on the mound, we're pretty darned confident we're going to win," said Box Turtle head coach Brett George. "He's nearly unhittable

most days."

The Turtles will play Kansas City West in the second round of the eight-team tournament tonight at 8 p.m. KC West defeated John Brown this morning 12-6 behind seven RBIs by KC West outfielder Otis Amos.

The tournament continues with four games on Friday and four more on Saturday at the JBBC with the championship game scheduled for 8 p.m. on Saturday.

## Story #2

A group of Ad Astra students are being eyed in a college test cheating ring, School Board President Michael Woodman confirmed today.

The seniors may have tried to improve their college prospects by hiring a third party to take their SAT exams, Woodman said.

"There are hearings taking place right now that are ongoing," Woodman said. "I know that the superintendent is talking to various people, including the principal and other administrators, to get to the bottom of what's going on. I know that they are looking into several students."

Among those under investigation, sources said, were two brothers — one a senior and the other already in college. The senior did not return several calls seeking comment, and relatives at his home also declined comment.

Woodman said that district is investigating whether the boy hired someone from a top

Midwestern university to take his SATs for him. Principal Gabe Kotter declined to comment on the matter, and Superintendent Vincent Barbarino said that policy prevented him from discussing any disciplinary issues involving students.

Students already know about the investigation.

"Everyone knows about [the allegations of cheating]," said senior Arnold Horshack. "You get the feeling that it's widespread — and not just here in Aspera."

The scandal marked the second black eye in recent days for the school. Last week, three graduates were arrested and charged with robbing a drug dealer.

### Story #3

School administrators are waiting to hear from the district on whether it will mandate that incoming freshmen take a course in college and career planning in their freshman year, possibly limiting their options for other courses.

At a School Site Council meeting on April 14, Principal Gabe Kotter said the Aspera Unified School District is deliberating whether or not it will require next year's incoming students to take College and Career during their freshman year.

All high schools in the district require students to take the class to graduate. Other high schools require it freshman year, but the district granted Ad Astra an exemption for the 2010-2011 school year, according to Kotter.

Kotter said in the meeting that AAHS is seeking another exemption for next year. The district has not yet decided, according to assistant principal of administration Leonard Washington.

The district mandates the course for freshmen because of its curriculum, according to College and Career teacher Mi-Ah Cho.

"Last year we started teaching a new curriculum that was targeted at freshmen, but I currently have no ninth graders in any of my classes," Cho said.

But even though she would be teaching students at the start of their high school careers instead of later years, Cho said she has mixed feelings about the potential mandate. Cho said that while some sections of the course are useful for Ad Astra students, chapters about time management and how to graduate from high school are not. "The curriculum is written for a district-wide level. We have a fantastic graduation rate, so some parts are too easy," she said.

Requiring freshmen to take College and Career may limit their other class options. The current course requirement plan would force them to take six classes and choose between taking a Visual Performing Art, foreign language or other elective if they want a seventh class.

To allow students the chance to take a VPA, foreign language or other elective, the school

may move a class that is currently mandatory for freshman schedule to sophomore year, according to counselor Lee Anthony. "We could move Biology or Modern World to sophomore year, since we have no science or history requirements then," he said.

Kotter also said that the school might have to consider restricting the option to take a seventh class because of next year's budget deficit.

The SSC has composed two budgets depending on the outcome of a proposed state tax measure, but must plan for the worst. The election that would decide the passing of the measure would be in June if Kansas legislators vote to put it on the ballot. If it doesn't pass, the budget would be slashed by 9 percent, according to math department head and SSC chair Marilyn Chambers. At the meeting, Kotter said that some full-time-employees would be laid-off, and class sizes increased.

The SSC voted at the meeting to allocate all available district and projected Advanced Placement funding to staffing for the upcoming school year under the worst possible budget scenario.

Kotter met with department chairs Monday to discuss next year's potential budget cuts. At the earlier SSC meeting he said that the school has not decided to close any current programs, but some individual sections (mods when a class is offered), and supplies for the school may have to wait on funding.

## Story #4 (Editorial)

Click click click — music to my ears. As my ring tone plays, my trembling fingers reach out, longing to fulfill their appetite for the day. The desire to communicate my latest news or complaints to a friend is a driving force that fuels what is now an effortless habit. I'm willing to stand up and say, "I'm Sol, and I'm a text-a-holic."

Four years ago, when I got my first cell phone, I was ecstatic to finally have a phone that no one else would answer, with all my friends' numbers ready to scroll. Unfortunately, I had to share a family plan with few minutes and — the bane of all teens' existences — limited texts.

And did they mean limited! Only 250 texts per month — not per day or even hour! So of course, for the first four months, I overshot my limit by the hundreds. Tired of having to pay extra on every bill, my parents finally decided to upgrade to unlimited texts, allowing me to succumb to my growing desire to text, no longer chained by the shackles of the Verizon company. Thrilled, I automatically texted all my friends the good news. Within only the first week, I sent 1,000 texts. Keep in mind that according to a CNN Tech article, teenagers on average send 3,339 texts per month. To be more precise, according to the article, females send 4,050 texts per month, while males send an average of 2,539 texts. Those statistics reassure me — if not my parents — that I'm a normal teenage girl.

As time went by, it became a ritual to text every minute of the day — no matter what. My phone became attached to my hand in class, at parties, while watching House, eating at Five Happiness Restaurant and even when I was ready to go to sleep. It was always within arms reach, even when I was in the shower, although it wasn't waterproof.

Unfortunately, I soon discovered the consequences of being a text addict. My family began to get annoyed at my lack of conversation. I found myself struggling to reply to their "So what

did you do today?" — distracted by the tiny tapping sounds. I was willing to do anything to fulfill my need to text, even going so far as to not hang out with my older cousins to watch the movie Easy A. It was time for a change. I had let my bad habit of texting manifest itself into an addiction. Attempting to control myself, I tried hiding my cell for a day, leaving it in the garage where I would hopefully forget it as I got busy. It didn't work; somehow my cell felt like a missing limb, causing me to feel "ghost vibrations." If carrying my phone, just one quick glance to see who had texted would distract me from my valiant goal.

After multiple backsliding moments, I finally got the idea of giving my charger to a friend, and letting my phone die. As it ran out of battery, I began to feel uneasy, going through the five stages of grief. I denied to everyone that I had a problem, became angry that I couldn't fight the urge to pick up my phone, and decided to bargain with myself that I could text two to ten people and it would be okay, feeling detached from the world without my phone in my hand. But trying to keep myself from yearning for my phone, I finally accepted that I needed to stop texting so much.

After I became more conscious of my actions and acknowledged my addiction, it was easier to put my cell down. I couldn't stop "cold turkey" — it would be too much to bear — instead I began to let my phone die or left it in my bag more often. From sending over 1,200 texts a week to only two to three thousand a month is what I consider a huge accomplishment.

Although my addiction isn't as unhealthy as an addiction to alcohol, it has been a hard habit to break. Even now that I'm doing college applications, I find myself resisting the urge to reply to my friend's urgent "guess what?" I even struggled with my five fingers typing this column as I'm more used to using my thumbs.

## Story #5

Details create the big picture — and the difference between something turning out just OK or great.

Ad Astra High School Drama Department Director Jason Alexander continues demonstrating to his cast and crew that their attention to little things make big things happen.

The department's spring musical, "The Drowsy Chaperone" opens on May 17 and runs through May 19 with performances at 7:30 p.m.

"It's really an amazing show — everything is so above and beyond," said Deanna Cyrus, a sophomore and the props mistress who makes sure everyone has what they need on stage.

"Every detail is so planned out and perfect," Cyrus said.

The musical features "the man in the chair," a loner living in the present day who never leaves his dingy apartment. As a lover of musical theatre, he listens to his old recordings from different eras and is transported back in time into the glamorous world of "The Drowsy Chaperone."

The play comes to life in his apartment in the Gatsby era of the jazz age.

Carpenters have constructed sets that are akin to a building a house and the twenty-five person production crew with an eye to historical accuracy, have paid fastidious attention to every detail replicating the time period.

"Our director goes to garage sales and Good Will to find authentic things from the era," said Anne Hathaway, a sophomore and assistant stage manager.

An example is an original Life Magazine cover featuring Julie Andrews in "My Fair Lady."

During "Tech Saturdays," crew members creatively armed with glue guns secured tiny handmade pastries and goblets filled with acrylic water onto trays. Others painstakingly adorned lanterns and kimonos with individual sequins and jewels while cast mothers at sewing machines helped complete the show's elaborate costumes.

Bonnie Delaney is just a freshman, but she has a senior role as wardrobe mistress.

"We have over 100 costumes involved from the '20s and '30s, which was really an elaborate time for outfits," she said. "'The Drowsy Chaperone' is a fantasy world."

Production Stage Manager Frank Coppola promises, "The audience will have the full experience from the second they walk in the door."

The high school lobby will be decorated from top to bottom for a wedding reception with a harpist and other authentic entertainment from the era. This entire set has to be dismantled after Thursday night's performance to accommodate Friday's classes and then be reassembled.

For last spring's "The Mysteries of Edwin Drood," Alexander received the Kansas Amateur Musical Theater award (the "Kamty") for best direction and costume design, and Coppola was mentioned for stage management.

"Coming from last year when Drood seemed to be the highest point one could reach -- everything now just triples," said Coppola, a junior.

"This is one of the most complex sets I've ever seen, let alone built."

The cast and crew who auditioned before Christmas, and then immediately began rehearsals have developed what Coppola said is incredible chemistry together — not just among the actors in the leading roles but also among the entire cast, the orchestra players and the crew.

This show was particularly competitive to get a spot in because characters in lead roles and the chorus have to "tap." Greg Hines, a former professional Broadway performer, helped them hone that skill in a workshop.

John Elton, the department's music and vocal director, has been creating award-winning productions with Alexander, for the past 15 years and said, "It's a fabulous, stylized and crisp show, I saw it on Broadway and enjoyed it, but I didn't find it memorable then. "

"Now, I don't know why I didn't remember it." Elton said. "It's so charming -- especially when Ad Astra High School puts their spin on it!"