



2025 IHSA JOURNALISM STATE FINALS: **HEADLINE WRITING**

DIRECTIONS & RULES

You are the headline writer of Abraham High School's The Standard (Middleland, Ill.). Your editor has provided you with six stories that are being considered for top billing in the next issue, meaning they will be placed “above the fold” at the top of the newspaper on the front page. Your editor wants you to write a main headline and a secondary headline for each story. Your editor will evaluate the headlines to determine which story gets top billing.

To clarify, and provide you a visual example, below is a historic edition of the New York Times. Per the rules of this contest...

Main Headline: MEN WALK ON MOON (16 characters)

Secondary Headline: “ASTRONAUTS LAND ON A PLAIN AFTER STEERING PAST CRATER (53 characters)



Below you will find the six stories, as well as the character limit parameters for each headline. Write your headlines in a word processing program, like Microsoft Word. At the top of your document, type “School Code: ####” with your individualized code numbers.



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Each letter and space equal one character.

Students will be judged on headline rules, creativity, and accuracy.

Start Time: 11:30 AM

Work must be complete: 1:00 PM

Submitted headlines will be run through plagiarism software. If any submitted stories are flagged for plagiarism, the competitor and advisor will be alerted and given a chance to review and refute the flagged work prior to a decision on disqualification by a games committee.

HEADLINE PARAMETER OVERVIEW

Headline 1 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters
Headline 2 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters
Headline 3 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters
Headline 4 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters
Headline 5 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters
Headline 6 Max	Main: 36 characters	Secondary: 60 characters



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HEADLINE STORIES & PARAMETERS

1) News Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

Students in the AHS AP European History class are preparing to embark on their most anticipated trip of the year. This adventure sets off at the beginning of April during the students' spring break where they will be visiting four countries in Eastern Europe, including Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The major cities they plan to explore on their journey are Vienna, Prague, Budapest and Kraków.

Senior Dawson Briner took AP Euro the last time it was offered at AHS in 2022-23. Briner has taken both AP Euro and AP US History. He took the opportunity to travel to France and England with his French class sophomore year.

"I encourage taking pictures of anything, honestly," Briner said. "And completely immersing yourself in the country."

Even students who took APUSH without taking AP Euro were invited to accompany them on their escapade. The AP Euro class includes many veteran students from the prior year of APUSH who were unable to attend any sort of trip due to price or scheduling conflicts.

Junior Christian Martinez is an APUSH veteran who wanted to take another AP history class with his friends. Martinez is anticipating the upcoming adventure and he is appreciative of the opportunity to travel so far around the globe with his fellow students.

"I'm really looking forward to visiting the Czech Republic, specifically Prague," Martinez said. "When people visit Europe, Czech Republic usually isn't one that comes to mind."

The trip will include 13 chaperones and 26 students. The group will mostly be traveling by bus from city to city, spending a few days in each. The key stops during the trip allow students to learn more about famous historical landmarks that they only read about in class. The travel group will also be visiting many museums, castles, and even Auschwitz, the largest of the German Nazi concentration camps and extermination centers during World War II.

With Poland, Austria, and Hungary being the main countries involved in WWII, the AP Euro class will have the privilege of deepening their understanding of the war, including Jewish anti-semitism. Prague has one of the best-preserved Jewish quarters in Europe since it was not bombed during the conflict.



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When planning this year's trip, History Teacher Kori James looked at many different destinations that were up for consideration, including Italy.

"I love traveling in Europe, and Italy is my personal favorite," James said. "When considering where to take this next crew of students, I purposely chose a location that most do not have at the top of their bucket list but is rich in history and culture. Knowing that we would have a personal tour guide to show us around sealed the deal for heading to the beautiful countries of Eastern Europe."

The classes will have the opportunity to discover new and interesting cultural flavors and cuisine which is always a highlight on any trip with teacher Kori James. Exploring each country's history and foods are of the utmost importance along with plenty of photo ops when planning the itinerary. James wants to give every student an amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience while broadening their world view.

"I'm most looking forward to Kraków because of the history behind the places we're going to see, like Schindler's Factory," said sophomore Ashlyn Dyck.

The group will be traveling with EF Educational Tours, which designs travel experiences "curated by world travelers and subject matter experts who understand that compelling itineraries should be full of opportunities for experiential learning."

This trip will be a life-changing adventure where students can immerse themselves in the history they have worked all year to learn. Students will acquire hands-on experiences and make memories with their classmates as they embark on the journey of a lifetime.



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2) News Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

Everyone knows about AHS Serve Day, the one day a year when the whole school serves the community, but have you ever wanted to do more? The new Logger Local Outreach Club, led by senior Lyla Hinton, gives students the opportunity to stay consistently involved in the community according to their own availability.

Hinton founded this club at AHS in an effort to follow a calling to give back to the community.

"I wanted to start this club to provide a way for students at our school to get out and show love to the community," Hinton said. "I also believe that when we show love to others, it changes us. We become more grateful and aware of how blessed we are!"

The students gathered for their first outreach on Thursday, January 30, at the Middleland Mission on Main Street to serve food to the homeless and less fortunate. The students offered up sandwiches, smiles, and dessert.

Senior Braxton Bay was among the students who signed up to help serve food at the Fresno Mission. He is drawn to this club's purpose and is eager to participate in the next outreach.

"My favorite part about it is meeting new people and serving others," Bay said.

With the initial launch of the club, Hinton received many enthusiastic sign-ups. She is thrilled to lead this growing group of students to be a light in the community.

"I'm so glad to see so many students taking an interest," Hinton said.

The club will continue to seek out after-school opportunities whenever they arise. Volunteers are consistently provided with new dates and locations, but they may pick and choose which options work best for them. A majority of the opportunities occur on Thursdays.

If you would like to take part in connecting with and supporting local people in need, contact Lyla Hinton in person, at school or by messaging the AHS Logger Local Outreach Club on Instagram.



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3) Feature Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

Senior Hannah Todd handed out blank sheets of paper to every student in AHS math teacher Elizabeth Landry's fifth-hour Honors Precalculus class. She instructed them to draw a four-by-four chart — they were preparing to play “Unit Circle Bingo.”

Todd, a cadet teacher for Landry since the beginning of the school year, spent two days brainstorming the format and design for the game, getting inspiration from “vocabulary bingo,” a game she played in English. She wanted students to have an interactive way of practicing a key calculus concept — unit circle values.

“Starting second semester, Mrs. Landry was like, ‘Do you want to be doing more activities?’” Todd said. “And I was like, ‘Yes, I would love to!’ So, I started coming up with ideas. I was like, ‘Oh, crosswords.’ But I wanted something more engaging to stick in your brain, so I thought bingo would be something they would remember.”

Todd displayed a list of trigonometric ratios on the classroom TV and told students to select 16 values to write on their charts. She then called out prompts such as “sine of pi over three” or “cotangent of five pi over six” until a student marked four in a row and yelled, “Bingo.”

While taking Landry's IB SL2 math course last year, Todd realized she enjoyed Landry's entertaining jokes and effective teaching style. Landry maintained a lighthearted atmosphere while breaking down each new topic. Todd decided that being a cadet teacher would allow her to focus on teaching others rather than just taking notes and completing homework for an additional class.

“I thought it would be fun to refresh my knowledge and help other students, or just help out the teacher,” Todd said. “It's a different type of learning environment than sitting in a classroom while the teacher lectures, something different than regular class.”

The AHS Cadet Teaching Program was instituted in 2019 and Todd is the ninth student to take part in that time. Todd assists Landry with creating lesson plans, organizing papers, making answer keys, printing materials, giving feedback on assignments and creating math-related activities. Todd even hand-labeled students' names on more than 100 folders for Landry to sort tests and classwork.

Landry appreciates the additional help and having an extra person to answer students' questions by guiding them step-by-step through math problems.

“Having Hannah for another year, being around her, having conversations with her, seeing where life is taking her, what she's going to do next and seeing her next steps are just things that help keep teachers keep going and pushing forward, because ultimately, we're in it for them,” Landry said.



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While Landry explains math concepts and students take notes, Todd listens in the background, completing her own homework or sorting class materials. Hearing and observing Landry teach reinforces concepts in her current math class, Calculus BC.

“I’ll be like, ‘Oh wait, I forgot about that,’” Todd said. “And if we’re doing something kind of similar, I can use that technique that I forgot about in my math class.”

Since taking precalculus as a sophomore, Todd has mastered concepts like graphing trigonometric functions and memorizing the unit circle. As a cadet teacher, she aims to communicate these same ideas clearly and help students with problems.

Junior Campbell Norris has noticed a positive difference in having an additional person to ask questions to in class. In challenging classes, Norris feels that it’s hard to receive a sufficient amount of teacher support, but Todd guides her through problems while Landry assists other students.

“Hannah explains it in a different way than Mrs. Landry,” Norris said. “It’s helpful to see a different way of doing it or get a new perspective on the problem to make [us] understand it better.”

Todd hopes the experience will help her improve her communication and speaking skills. She believes verbalizing her thought process and connecting with Landry will benefit her as she pursues her neuroscience and engineering goals. Todd wants to develop technology for brain research, so having the ability to explain her ideas clearly is crucial.

“Being able to share my knowledge will translate to what I’m doing in the future,” Todd said. “It feels good to be able to successfully explain things, and I get to help a teacher who really helped me when I was in my math class.”



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4) Feature Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

Junior Addy Sullivan spreads two full decks of cards on the lunch table for her friends, juniors Sophia Brockmeier and Catherine Beltrame. Catherine draws a card from one deck, then holds hands with Sophia. Catherine “telepathically” tells Sophia what card she picked, and Sophia then draws a card from the second deck.

Addy asks various questions about the card like, ‘What suit is the card?’ ‘Is it red or black?’ Then the two reveal their cards. And somehow, they’re identical.

“I’m really impressed all the time,” Catherine said. “I don’t know how she does it, and she has a good presentation with it as well. She really makes up the whole vibe of the trick.”

This deception is just one of the endless magic tricks Addy has created on her own with her method she calls “Occultist.”

Addy gained experience performing in front of her peers beginning in middle school and after mastering the art of card tricks, she has made it past the first three rounds of auditioning for America’s Got Talent.

She sent in her first audition tape in early January and has since crafted an act for the show, had a call with the producers and sent in a final audition tape. She finds out if she’s going to Hollywood on March 11.

Addy grew up watching AGT with her family and when she realized auditions were coming up in January, she decided to try out — as a joke at first. But after making it past the first round of auditions she began to take it seriously and realized she had a shot at going on the show.

Going on AGT will also give Addy the chance to spread the art of magic. At the end of each of her tricks, either her family or friends are astonished. What they initially think is a silly joke or a simple sleight-of-hand appears to be true magic.

“That’s why I love it,” Addy said. “If I can give someone the chance to believe in magic, that magic just might be real, then I’ve done my part. I guess that’s also another reason why I’m going on AGT too, is really just to help people, possibly, maybe just believe that there’s just a sliver of magic out there.”

Her first time learning magic tricks was in 2020 when her older brother Finn gave her a magic set, including a deck of cards. During the COVID-19 quarantine, with nothing better to do, Addy began to learn magic and started watching YouTube videos to learn more tricks.

Coming back to school in-person her eighth grade year, she performed magic tricks for her peers during lunch, bringing people together and making them happy through her talent, according to Addy. This year, Addy has started performing tricks in class more, carrying a pack of cards in her backpack at all times.



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“Magic, it’s kind of like music,” Addy said. “It almost brings people together. I just wanted to make people happy while doing it.”

While Addy has the option of using a gimmicked coin or a gaffed deck of cards for a trick, she prefers using a regular deck of cards, relying on her mastered sleight of hand to pull off her tricks, as well as psychology. Addy uses psychology to figure out what card someone has drawn or to convince a spectator to draw a specific card from the deck.

“You want everything to be inspectable after so they can really be like ‘oh my gosh, I have a connection with this person,’” Addy said. “It’s a lot of psychology, actually, believe it or not, when it comes to magic. I’ve created a method that is so devious, almost.”

After a couple of years learning tricks online, Addy began to use her knowledge of magic to create her own tricks. Taking inspiration from magic shows like Penn and Teller, she developed her own tricks from the ones she saw and built off of them. Addy is constantly thinking of magic and coming up with new tricks.

“My main thought is always like, ‘If someone were to do a magic trick on me, what would I think is really cool?’” Addy said.



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5) Editorial Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

As the Israel-Hamas war wages on, the excessive free speech we see in protests across the nation continue to unveil antisemitism and the rise of hate speech, defaced property and harassment of students on college campuses. Many of these disturbances are left with little to no consequences creating a deafening silence from those in authority.

Freedom of speech is one of the five pillars of rights protected in the First Amendment. Should free speech have limits? Does freedom of speech mean free of consequence? When does free speech cross the line?

On Capitol Hill, December 5, Jewish students attending prestigious ivy league American institutions shared their experience on these campuses. Eyal Yokoby from UPENN, Bella Ingber from NYU, Tallia Khan from MIT, and Jonathan Frieden from Harvard Law testified before the Committee on Education and the Workforce, recounting assaults, mobs, and harassment they faced. Ingber, a junior, speaks on what it is like to be a “Jew at NYU.”

“Being a Jew at NYU is walking to class passing torn and defaced posters of innocent hostages with the words ‘occupier’ and ‘murderer’ written across their faces,” said Ingber in a measured but passionate tone. “Being a Jew at NYU is being surrounded by students and faculty who support the murder and kidnapping of Jews, because after all as they say, ‘resistance is justified when people are occupied.’ It is being surrounded by social justice warriors and self-proclaimed feminists whose calls for justice end abruptly when the rape victims are Jews.”

She punctuated her final statement with her own experience of harassment: “Being a Jew at NYU has meant being physically assaulted in NYU’S library by a fellow student while I was wearing an American-Israeli flag and having my attacker still roam freely throughout the campus.”

Not far from NYU, a Queens high school teacher who posted a picture on Facebook at a peaceful pro-Israel rally, unintentionally incited hundreds of students to riot and destroy property, causing law enforcement to hide her behind locked doors until the chaos was controlled, on November. 20. This incident provoked controversy over the administration’s handling of the situation. As of December 1, only a few students are still facing possible suspension as the teacher continues to receive harassment via social media, her personal home and targeting of her family.

A 2022 Knight Foundation Poll showed, 9 in 10 Americans believed that protecting freedom of speech is an important part of American democracy. In the same survey, 77% believed all opinions and views, even those that are offensive, promote healthy debate within a society.

Free speech has broad legal protections under U.S law and can be used as the justification for hate speech, and racially- infused bigotry. Most institutions have adopted the same definition of antisemitism as the Anti-defamation league (ADL) which reads:



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“Adopting a clearly defined definition but failing to protect against it exposes the antisemitism that lurks just below the surface. Students across college campuses should feel safe and free to advance themselves no matter what geo-political alignment, religion, or racial creed they identify with. “Context,” which has been the most used excuse, does not justify the hateful actions.”

Are we reliving a modern version of the road to Hitler’s holocaust with the allowance of unchecked antisemitism?

We stand with those who are vulnerable in this present climate. We call for strong leadership on college campuses and in our government when free speech crosses the line into harassment and threats.

College application season recently came to a close as many seniors await acceptance letters. As decision time comes quickly, will students consider college’s response, action or inaction during the rise of antisemitism and hate speech on campus? Students eyes should be opened to an institution’s response to the radicalization of free speech.



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6) Sports Story Headline

Main Headline: 36 Characters

Secondary Headline: 60 Characters

AHS cross country competed in the 2024 Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Cross Country State Finals on Saturday, November 9. The state meet was held at Detweiller Park in Peoria.

Sophomore Blake Bay finished 6th overall in Class 2A with a time of 15:12. He broke the school record with that time, which was 10 years old and previously held by Gus Mackey (15:10). Fellow sophomore, Jeremiah Valorosi, also qualified from Sectionals to run as an individual at state and finished with a time of 17:22.

All six girls on the Logger XC team qualified for the state finals as a team and finished the state course with their fastest team time of the season. The team tallied 143 points, finishing in 16th place. This year's state squad consisted of two freshmen, two sophomores, one junior and one senior.

Freshman standout Madison Siebert has achieved many personal records in this season, including running 22:03 at the state championships to place 27th. She loves running and celebrated making it to state as a freshman.

"Going to the state meet as a freshman was so exciting and scary at the same time," said Siebert. "I was so excited to get to run again before the season ended."

All runners who finish in the Top 30 at the state meet receive All-State honors, giving the Loggers a pair of returning All-State runners entering the 2025 season.

State Girls times:

Lacy Smith, Freshman, 20:55 (27th)

Chloe Ledieff, Junior, 21:00 (42nd)

Madison Siebert, Freshman, 22:03 (71st)

Hailey Highton, Sophomore, 22:18 (74th)

Giada Gilmore Young, Sophomore, 24:05 (97th)

Laina Penland, Senior, 24:35 (104th)

State Boys times:

Blake Bay, Sophomore, 15:12 (6th)

Jeremiah Valorosi, sophomore, 17:22 (103rd)



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SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

1. Upon completing your work, be sure your four-digit school code is at the top of the document. Be sure your name or school name do not appear in the document or file name.

2. Turn your work into a PDF (File > Save as > Save as Type) and name the file as follows:

Four Digit School Code – Event Name

So it should look like this...

1234 – Headline Writing.pdf

3. Go to www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series

4. Find your event and click the “Submit Work” link that applies to it.

5. Select the PDF of your work to upload. In the First Name box, type your four-digit school code. In the Last Name box, re-type your four-digit school to confirm.

6. Once you are prompted that your document as uploaded successfully, please log out if you are using a Heartland Computer.