Beginning News Writing Story Assignment

You’ve been given an assignment to cover a recent campus evacuation. Interview three sources to find out what happened. Write a news story explaining what happened and using quotes from people who were involved.

Here’s what you know:

The entire school was evacuated at about 9 a.m. on Tuesday. People are saying that it had something to do with the chemistry lab and sulfuric acid may have been involved.

Here is who you need to interview (three sources of information):

1) Chemistry teacher: The alarm sounded in his classroom. Ask questions to find out what he knows.

2) Campus security guard: Responsible for safeguarding the campus. Ask what happened and how she responded.

3) Student who was in the chemistry lab when the alarm sounded. Ask him what he what knows.

*You may also want to do a little research about the incident before writing your story.*

FORMAT:

Write in L-Q-T-Q format

Use a strong summary lead, transitions and quotes.

End with a kicker quote.

Write in third person.

Length: 300-500 words

**Information for those playing the roles**

**All players:** *Only provide information that they ask you for, even your name.*

**Chemistry teacher (assign to teacher or an editor)**

Name: Don Butterfingers

You were getting ready to conduct a chemistry lab in your second period class. As you were transporting a container of sulfuric acid to your work space, it slipped out of your hands and broke on the floor. The acid spilled over the floor and filled the room with noxious fumes. You instructed a responsible student, Tim Glad, to call campus security and tell them to sound the evacuation alarm, and then you ushered your students out of the class through a door to the rear, away from the spill. No one was in danger.

You think you may have been a bit overly cautious in requesting a school-wide evacuation for a chemical spill in your classroom, but you were playing it safe. Your classroom was cleaned up but remained sealed off for the rest of the day. You taught your remaining classes in the back of the media center.

**Security Guard (assign to an editor)**

Name: Tina Stern

You received a call Tuesday at about 9 a.m. from a student in the chemistry lab saying that the chemistry teacher, Don Butterfingers, was requesting a campus evacuation and clean-up of a chemical spill in his classroom.

You sounded the evacuation alarm and alerted the principal. The principal called the school system’s police/security department and they alerted local authorities. Soon, a hazardous materials clean-up crew arrived to deal with the situation. At least three fire trucks, one ambulance and a mobile command center arrived in the school parking lot, but they were not needed. It took about one hour to ensure the campus was safe for students to return; then students were released to their fourth-period classes. The chemistry lab was sealed off until the rest of the spill could be cleaned up.

**Student (assign to an editor)**

Name: Tim Glad, junior

You were in your second-period chemistry class, ready to start an experiment, when you saw Mr. Butterfingers drop a container of sulfuric acid on ground. The container broke and the chemicals spread across the floor. It smelled terrible, like the worst fart ever. Mr. Butterfingers instructed you to call security and request an evacuation of the campus. You followed instructions, the alarm sounded, and students evacuated your class through the back door, away from the spill. Everyone was glad to get out of there. You were sorry you had to miss the lab, because Mr. Butterfingers had promised to show you a big chemical reaction. You’re sure this wasn’t what he meant.