

Words and Writing

Mod 7, Part 10

Headline Writing Rules

Student's Name: _____

You should spend time brainstorming headlines, just like you do for the actual copy. As review and for example:

Is there a clever play on words you can use?

OLE MISake – Story about the Gators loss to Ole Miss in an error-filled game

EYE have amoeba – Story about a student who got amoeba in her eye from swimming in a lake and had to have it treated.

Alliteration? Students spent Saturday saving school – Story about club members who spent a Saturday cleaning up campus after a storm.

Quote? 'Pray for rain' – Story about players who practice in 100-degree in August heat and wanted afternoon relief from the rain – taken from player quote.

In this exercise, we will look at some of the rules of writing headlines. Many headlines have a subject, verb, and a direct object. They show a clever play on words and they even may include a quote. Other points to remember are below.

- Avoid writing articles: a, an, the in your headlines.
- And – replace it with a comma (example: Staff, students choose longer school day)
- Avoid names in headlines unless they are well known
- Avoid label leads (example: Girls soccer earns title – it is the girls soccer page, obviously you are not writing about the football team on this spread.)
- Write in present tense, since headlines are what the story IS about
- Do not ask questions. You are telling the reader what the story is about, not questioning him/her.
- Avoid periods – they stop a reader. A headline is meant to pull people into the story quickly
- Omit forms of the verb be – write in active voice

Instructions:

Wait, what did that just say? Yep, these really happened. These are real headlines found in a variety of newspapers, yearbooks, or ads. Identify the error the writer made and rewrite the headline using the rules and guidelines listed in this exercise. You are encouraged to write a headline using the kicker, wicket, hammer, and tripod styles from Mod 7, Part 9.

1. POLICE BEGAN CAMPAIGN TO RUN DOWN JAYWALKERS

- a. What is wrong?

- b. Rewrite headline.

i.

2. ENGLISH TEACHERS INCORPORATE CHANGED IN LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

- a. What is wrong?

- b. Rewrite headline.

i.

3. TWO SISTERS REUNITED AFTER 18 YEARS IN CHECKOUT LINE

- a. What is wrong?

- b. Rewrite headline.

i.

4. BOYS BASKETBALL BEATS OPPONENTS

a. What is wrong?

b. Rewrite headline.

i.

5. THE SGA COLLECTED 2500 POUNDS OF CANNED GOOD

a. What is wrong?

b. Rewrite headline.

i.

6. WIN STATE TITLE AND ANOTHER STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

a. What is wrong?

b. Rewrite headline.

i.

7. JOHN THOMPSON LEADS TEAM TO VICTORY

a. What is wrong?

b. Rewrite headline.

i.

8. CAN YOU USE ALL THE NEW TECHNOLOGY?

a. What is wrong?

b. Rewrite headline.

i.
