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## UNIT 6 WRITING LEADS AND HEADLINES

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## 6.0 INTRODUCTION

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In journalistic and media parlance, a headline refers to the text which prominently appears at the start of an article, effectively encapsulating its content or nature. Headlines, also referred to as header, is a brief framing of information provided in an article or story and is positioned at the beginning giving readers an overview of the ensuing content. Scholars and practitioners hold that headlines generally capture reality in brief and encapsulate highlights of an article or story. This definition of headings is true for all media channels like television, print and radio.

In aired television news programs, headlines are read out first to present an outline, for viewers, of incidents covered in the capsule. Headlines are also defined for debate and roundtable discussion programs and are used in promotional campaigns to inform viewers about the subject. In print media like newspapers, magazines, tabloids, newsletters and also their online versions, headlines appear above an article or story in bold to attract attention and concisely present facts of the content. Over the years, headlines have diversified from their traditional framework to the modern format where headlines are composed to invoke curiosity in the reader, trigger a question in his or her mind, prompt them to read to find answers or present interesting and relevant facts and findings.

The headline is followed by the lead, which simply is the first paragraph of any story or article containing the central details of the piece. Lead can be interpreted as the key message of the story put across briefly and specifically. It thus gives readers a glimpse of what the story is about, even if they do not continue reading. Writers adopt an inverted pyramid approach consisting of the 5W's and H to detail out the key pointers in incident related reporting and special stories. Composing leads thus entails building the narrative by tying together who, what, when, where, why and how aspects of any subject. Experts add that considering ABC is also vital in writing the lead, which entails confirming the accuracy, brevity and clarity of information included in the lead.

Thus, in combination, headlines and leads aid print, television and radio program consumers in becoming aware of the subject and its key elements covered in a story, article or feature. In news presentations on television and radio, the headlines are read out first. Leads are the opening lines of each story detailed by anchors and are generally followed by ground reports.

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## 6.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Post completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of headline and lead and the difference

- Identify elements to be included in headlines and leads
- Understand how structures of headlines and leads are built

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## 6.2 LEADS

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With readers and viewers being spoilt for choices in terms of available media channels like print, television and radio, many consumers of daily newspapers and magazines do not show an inclination to read an entire story or article. They typically read through the first paragraph to understand the subject and tonality of the article or report and decide about whether to continue reading or move on to the next piece. This first paragraph, known as the lead, is therefore important as it can stimulate interest among readers or deflate their interest. Hence a lead needs to present vital information in a clear way so that readers can evaluate the story's direction. Typically, a lead should be between 25 words to 30 words and never exceed beyond 40 words.

### 6.2.1 Lead Meaning

A publication of the Ahmedabad-based National Institute of Mass Communication & Journalism defines a lead as the initial paragraph of a story or a few of the initial paragraphs of a long narrative, which is aimed at piquing curiosity among readers and guiding them to read the entire piece. Thus, the lead attracts the reader's attention and interest, while the rest of the story builds up on the initial interest level.

### 6.2.2 The Inverted Pyramid

A good lead must provide readers with relevant details about any incident or narrative following the inverted pyramid approach. This comprises of the 5Ws implying who, what, when, where, why and the 1H meaning how. The lead of any story or report must provide these inputs to further entice readers to read the full story. Professionals and practitioners opine that it is the why which contains the central issue and its causes.

In terms of an incident 'who' refers to the victims and those involved in an incident. In case of achievement or major feats, who is the person being credited for the same. 'What' refers to the precise occurrence or incident or in the case of articles the principal subject of the write up. 'When' means the period during which an incident took place or someone won an honour, if the report is about an achievement. It can also mean the time of a happening which an article or story is narrating. 'Where' refers to the location of the happening being reported about. If the report is about an achievement, where would mean the competition or event won by the achiever. As mentioned above, 'why' is a vital link in the inverted pyramid setup as it provides insights into the reasons which resulted in a happening or incident. This, therefore, explains the cause-and-effect relation. In case of recognition or victory achieved by someone, this aspect clarifies the reason for which the individual was awarded. Last but not least, the link in the inverted pyramid approach how provides readers with inputs about the sequence or chronology in which an incident occurred or happened. It also explains the manner in which an individual wins an accolade or competition.

### 6.2.3 Subject-Verb-Object Principle

A powerful lead needs to be written in the active voice, observe professionals and experts. Passive voice sentence construction needs to be avoided as it fails to strike up a conversation with readers, viewers or listeners. That happens when the active voice form is used. To aid writers avoid mistakes, the subject-verb-object formula for sentence framing has been put forward. For example in a report about employee pay hike, a passive voice sentence is typically framed as ‘After months of buoyant business, employees of Fred Smith store to receive their bonus after four year gap.’ The more direct and active framing will be ‘Employees of Fred Smith store to receive bonus after four years, following improved business performance.’ A couple of points from the above examples, the first being active voice sentences are less lengthy. The second, placing the human element of the story upfront. Thus, the alternative sentence being with ‘employees.’ To avoid clutter in lead sentences use of adjectives and adverbs are best avoided or kept minimal.

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## 6.3 LEADS TYPE

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### 6.3.1 Summary Lead

Summary lead is the oft followed form of lead writing, with a long tradition. Most breaking news reports are composed in this format. Also referred to as news lead or direct lead, it provides readers or audiences answers to the 5Ws and 1H informing them about the subject of the story. Experts however also note that summary leads have mostly been covering 4Ws i.e. *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*, leaving the *why* to be answered in the rest of the story. With the popularization of electronic and digital media, print media journalists are diverting away from this approach to avoid reader apathy arising from having knowledge of the incident already. Therefore writers are becoming creative in composing leads to better engage with audiences. As such experts point to leads in present times being more analytical and in depth focusing on 1W and 1H. The *why* and *how* of the inverted pyramid are increasingly being prioritized by print media journalists. Hannah Block, news editor with National Public Radio states that leads should bring forth facts together with attention grabbing details and backgrounds.

#### Example 1:

The business segment of Associated Press carries a section which presents selected compilation of leads, apt for understanding the art of clearly setting out facts in short paragraphs.

Intensifying its fight against high inflation, the Federal Reserve raised its key interest rate for a third straight time and signaled more large rate hikes to come – an aggressive pace that will heighten the risk of an eventual recession.

#### Example 2:

Last week, a team of scientists published a new study showing how regular exercise benefits mental health. The research involved over 50,000 participants over a period of ten years, and were announced in a press release from the journal that published the paper

### 6.3.2 Single Item Lead

This pattern of lead writing, though akin to summary lead, differs from it by providing readers information about only couple of W's. Single item leads do not attempt to provide inputs about all 5Ws and 1H in a single paragraph. Experts opine that this approach to lead writing is pertinent for incidents having a solitary angle or context. As such these leads are concise compared to the previous one, it creates a greater impact and draws in readers to understand the story better.

**Example 1:** Indian cricket team loses the final of ICC World Cup

**Example 2:** President Kennedy was slain by an assassin today in a burst of gunfire in downtown Dallas

### 6.3.3 Anecdotal and Analogy Leads

When information to be shared with readers is complex and has certain conceptual aspects linked to it, using anecdote in the lead is an effective option. In this approach to lead writing, readers are not provided inputs about the 5Ws. Rather analogies and anecdotes are provided to prepare readers about details and concepts involved in the story they are about to read. The outcome is a creative and stylized lead which is attractive and engages readers. These leads tend to compare the concepts or happenings, being reported about with aspects which are known to common readers. As such, analogy leads puts matters into perspective in commoner language.

**Example 1:** *Sharon Jackson was sitting at the table reading an old magazine when the phone rang. It was a reporter asking to set up an interview to discuss a social media controversy involving Jackson and another young woman. "Sorry," she said. "I've already spoken to several reporters about the incident and do not wish to make any further comments."*

**Example 2:** A gripping anecdotal start to a story by Lulu Garcia-Navarro published online by NPR about murder count being 60,000 and relaxation of gun ownership laws in Brazil being on the cards:

*"At the dilapidated morgue in the northern Brazilian city of Natal, Director Marcos Brandao walks over the blood-smeared floor to where the corpses are kept. He points out the labels attached to the bright metal doors, counting out loud. It has not been a particularly bad night, yet there are nine shooting victims in cold storage."*

### 6.3.4 Delayed Identification Lead

In this lead only 2Ws and 1H are used though *who* is not revealed upfront. This lead aptly describes a situation or circumstance so that readers understand the context. Subsequently inputs are provided to readers about the remaining Ws. The lead is written in way which negates the vitality of 'who' in the lead. In other words, readers do not miss lack of that information. Rather it heightens their interest to know the person who did what was done. Descriptive pronouns, like a student or one of the teachers, are used to denote the unnamed person in the lead paragraph.

**Example 1:** *“He was the quite Beatle who left the loud legacy,”* a CNN story lead announcing the demise of George Harrison).

**Example 2:** *“Thousands dressed in scarlet and gray T-shirts eagerly shuffled into the football stadium as the university fight song blared.”*

### 6.3.5 Observational Lead

This lead allows journalists to share their knowledge and awareness about the issue or issues being discussed and linking the information to broader ramifications. This being a lengthy version is not conducive to report breaking stories but suited for feature or analytical pieces where the writer first lays out the situation or context before moving onto providing relevant details. In a way, to write this lead journalists step back taking an overview of the issue and its wider perspectives.

**Example 1:** An observational lead by political commentator Karen Tumulty published in Washington Post –

*At the lowest point of Donald Trump’s quest for the presidency, the Republican nominee might have brought in a political handyman to sand his edges. Instead, he put his campaign in the hands of a true believer who promises to amplify the GOP nominee’s nationalist message and reinforce his populist impulses.*

**Example 2:** Another lead by Camilla Domonoske published in NPR –

*Tax records and literary criticism are strange bedfellows. But over the weekend, the two combined and brought into the world a literary controversy — call it the Ferrante Furor of 2016.*

### 6.3.6 Question Lead

As the name suggests, this lead poses questions about the story subject to arouse interest and curiosity among readers. This lead does not provide any information, rather it is the following paragraph which fulfills that need. Experts hold that this lead has a conversational tone and if composed well it can immediately engage with readers. It makes them eager to know the details and hence this lead should be followed by information sharing.

**Example 1:** *“What’s increasing faster than the price of gasoline? Apparently, the cost of court lobbyists. District and Justice Court Judges want to hire lobbyist Rick Loop for \$1,50,000 to represent the court system in Carson City through the 2009 legislative session. During the past session, Loop’s price tag was \$80,000.”*

**Example 2:** *“Are you using TikTok or Instagram for business? Looking for a content strategy that works and won’t leave you exhausted? In this article you’ll discover a three-step strategy to create highly engaging TikTok an Instagram content that will scale your audience while helping you to avoid burnout.”*

**Activity 1:** Pickup today's newspaper and identify five Leads. Also enlist the approaches adopted for writing the same.

### Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your Answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What is meant by Lead. What are the approaches to writing it?

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2. What is Inverted Pyramid Approach?

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3. What is the difference between summary and delayed identification leads?

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## 6.4 HEADLINE – MEANING AND FUNCTION

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The title appearing atop the start of a story in daily publications, magazines, periodicals or newsletters is known as headline. In the case of online publications, headline is also referred to as heading.

### 6.4.1 Headline Meaning

It has been described as the top level heading or header before an article opens or narration of story starts, and presents summarized indication of the story subject. Headlines clearly state the principle point of the subsequent content or the category it belongs to. This provides readers a clear understanding of what they are going to read.

### 6.4.2 Headline Function

Media professionals and practitioners underline the multiple functions of headlines of print media news and television or radio broadcasts. The first is

they offer relevant information to readers and listeners thereby appealing to their interest and curiosity to read the whole story or listen to the entire broadcast. In doing so, headlines fulfill the semantic as well as the pragmatic functions. The former refers to the clarification about meaning of an article which headlines bring. Headline also lay out the tone of an article and the positioning of its author or the agency publishing it. For news or feature report dealing with national issues, headlines tend to provide the browsing reader with a projection of the country and its standing among global peers. Also a nation's ideology gets depicted through headlines and therefore has an influence on readers and their engagement with the story.

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## 6.5 HEADLINE WRITING PROCESS

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Literary and technical considerations are integral to composition of a headline which effectively grabs reader attention. Size and style of font used, placement of the content, width of the text and overall presentation are key elements for journalists and authors to ponder on. Also vital are the kind of words used, creative structuring of the sentence and the type it belongs to. Both aspects combine to produce a headline which can hook readers.

### 6.5.1 Font Size and Display

In print and digital media, headlines need to comply with word and space limitations. For two column stories, headlines are composed to cover both columns, while for single column stories headlines spread over two or the layers with couple of words making up each layer. Editors are assigned the job of determining the optimal font size in many big publication houses.

Practitioners opine that font style of the headline needs to be aligned with tonality of the piece, the headline is being written for. For pages communicating matters that are official or serious in tonality, classic or the serif style font are appropriate as they enable a neat and orderly presentation of the matter. For matters relate to tradition and customs also, such fonts are used. For informal pages, like tabloids or pullouts, or kids related content stylized or decorative fonts are more in circulation. It has also been suggested that use of contrasting headlines captures reader attention better. Hence headlines are made bold to make it stand out separate from the following body copy. Style of headline fonts also needs to be in contrast to the body copy font style and use of similar group of fonts should be avoided. Therefore, use of two serif or sans serif fonts is not advised as it will dilute contrast. Use of coloured text in headlines is another way of bringing about contrast while taking care to have contrast between the headline colour and the background colour. Font size of headlines needs to be 32 points or more so that it becomes easily visible and distinct from the body text done in lower font size. Excessively big font size is used for significant news of national importance like a massive disaster, major achievements and deaths of leaders. These are referred to as banner font page.

In news rooms and among editors, a single line headline is known a single deck which a two liner headline is known as double deck. Therefore a headline denoted as 3-48-1 would imply a headline for three columns,



composed in 48 points and will be a one liner. Similarly 2-36-2 would imply headline for two columns, done in 36 font size and spread over 2 lines.

### 6.5.2 Style and Width

The width of a headline is determined by the column space set aside. So if a story is 3 columns wide, then headline will be three columns wide also. When the headline is wider than the story column width, then the double decker approach is adopted and the headline split into two separate lines. Sometimes text kerning is done to fit the headline with the demarcated space. This involves controlling the space between words to keep the width within limit. The value editors attach to a news piece gets reflected in the headline too and is known as its weight. For important news reports, headlines stretch over more than one column and shows the priority editors have attached to it. Often big and bold fonts are used to effectively impress upon readers about the criticality of the article following the head. Such presentation gets reader time and interest. Headlines of other news pieces are one in font size lesser than the main header. Also italics and other stylized fonts are used for headlines of feature items, while more formal and prominent fonts are used for news article headlines. Thus for the formal sans serif fonts are used while for the latter serif fonts are used.

Assessment of news value and angle is also a vital step in the process of headline formulation. Angle and value is determined on the basis of points raised or arguments presented in a story which leads to formulation of certain perspectives. An example is human angle or human interest stories, which deal with everyday issues and presents it from the position of local people. An angle therefore is the key message communicated, which can be altered if the context changes.

### 6.5.3 Composing a Headline

Practitioners advise that a good headline should contain between 5 words to 10 words and be to the point and focus on specifics. Use of verb to open a headline needs to be avoided though active verb should be employed and the entire headline written in present tense. When a headline needs to communicate a future happening, infinitive verb use is suggested. Also headlines should be a complete sentence or read as complete sentence implying the same. Facts or data from the story can be used in the headline to make it more interesting or appealing to readers.

**Activity 2:** Explain news angle with examples from stories published on the front page of today's newspaper of your choice.

### Check Your Progress: 3

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your Answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain a Headline?

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2. Why is headline important?

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3. Outline the process of headline writing?

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## 6.6 TYPES OF HEADLINES

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There are different types of headline approaches which are used by journalists to attract reader attention.

### 6.6.1 Direct Headline

Headline which clearly defines the outline of an article is known as direct headline. Such headlines draw on facts used into the article to present the central message narrated in the article. This type of headlines enable readers to precisely know what they are about to read.

Example: BJP wins big in assembly elections

### 6.6.2 Indirect Headline

When a headline carries subtle indications about the central message of an article, it is known as indirect headline. This format does not clearly spell out the main story aspect but presents an indication about it, thereby inciting curiosity of readers about what the article contains.

Example: Education Reforms – Progression or Regression?

### 6.6.3 News Headline

A headline which presents vital announcement about any company or its products and services is known as news headline. This type of headline is leveraged by journalists to share updated developments and information with readers.

Example: Bata announces the launch of its 100<sup>th</sup> store in India

### 6.6.4 Question Headline

A headline which presents a question to the readers is known as a question headline. The article following such a headline type provides answers to the question raised. Such headlines are relevant for consumer interest stories or stories related to a specific brand or its products and services.

Example: Do you know which fruits are bad for diabetes?

### 6.6.5 Command Headline

Headlines which communicate to readers what they can learn from reading a specific article is known as command headlines. It also can communicate to readers what they are not supposed to do or follow. Such headlines are use by companies for their advertising campaigns and generally are initiated with an action verb.

Example: Give your room a new look using this technique

### 6.6.6 Emotional Headline

When headlines tend to appeal to a positive or negative sentiment or feeling among readers to induce them to read the full article is known as emotional headline. To convey the desired message and create connect with readers, journalists tend to use strong words in such headlines.

Example: Five ways to prevent work related burnout in the coming year

### Check Your Progress: 4

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your Answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the types of headlines?

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2. Distinguish between direct and indirect headlines

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3. What is a command headline? How is it different from emotional headline?

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## 4. What is news headline?

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## 6.7 HEADLINE PROPS

In reference to headlines, props are elements which are use along with the headline to make it more meaningful and clear to readers. Insertion of space, use of additional words and special expression are some props used in headline composition. These props do not have a singular function but serves the purpose for which they are used in specific contexts. In terms of news related reports, in most stories the inverted pyramid approach enables the important news point to come to the fore. This is generally used in the headline and elaborately built on in the lead. However if more than one news point is contained in a news item, headline props are used to segregate one from the other and also indicate their priority.

### 6.7.1 Shoulder Prop

Also known as kicker prop, the shoulder prop is placed above the principle headline though is smaller in font size and also in width and weight. In previous practice trends, shoulder prop highlighted the central message of a story. But currently it is used to clarify the main news point which is not mentioned in the headline.

#### Example:

Shoulder: Hectic back channel negotiations continue

Headline: Plane hijackers serve ultimatum

In print it would appear as –

Hectic back channel negotiations continue

**Plane hijackers serve ultimatum**

### 6.7.2 Strapline

It is known as strapline probably because of its positioning in relation to the headline. It follows the headline and so appears below it. In such use it is placed inverse to shoulder prop. The strapline prop is aimed at keeping the reader with the piece and enticing him or her to go further. Additional information supplementing news point disclosed in the headline make up the strapline content. With font size lesser than the headline this prop occupies single column space. This differentiates headline from strapline to readers.

#### Example

Headline: India sets up clash with Australia

Strapline: Kohli's ton comes handy

### 6.7.3 Crosshead

Crosshead aids in keeping the reader with a long article or piece through dismantling of narrative monotony. Crossheads are composed in font size at least double that of the main text and is placed between lines after every three or at most five paragraphs. Purpose of crossheads, other than breaking monotony, is to summarize important news points covered in the paragraphs it precedes. As it is spilled over the story body, crossheads are not headline props in the technical sense. It makes reading easy and engaging when placed in a long narrative. It also supplies readers with bits about what they can expect further into the account.

#### Example:

In a narrative about Queen Victoria, crossheads are Birth, Lineage, Childhood, Ascending the Throne, Queen Years, and Death.

### 6.7.4 Sidehead

Sideheads are composed in font size similar to that of the body text, although appear in bold, and are placed at the initiation of a paragraph. When introducing a new point into a running narrative, sideheads are mostly used. Like crossheads, sideheads also do not strictly comply with headline props outline, nonetheless is commonly considered so.

### 6.7.5 Navigation

Singular or couple of words is what navigation headline props constitute and is a guide for readers to find their preferred pieces. It appears in the middle of text and underlines the subject by explaining the body text. It thus makes the text easy to comprehend.

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## 6.8 FEATURE HEADLINE

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Feature headlines are those which are written for feature articles, which are softer stories compared to news pieces. Such headlines are crafted to be catchy so that it can guide readers into reading the article. Focus of such headlines is creativity more than factuality.

### 6.8.1 Difference between News and Feature Headlines

News and feature articles are two distinct writing styles having their specific significance. News stories are more factual and seek to provide readers with every detail about any event or incident. Thus news headlines too tend to present information for reader attention. A feature headline shares the message of the story it precedes. In term of relevance, that of news articles is immediate and therefore time defined. In comparison, feature headlines are not time defined. They can always be read and found relevant. News headlines bring forth facts about its story while outline of feature headlines are dictated by the content.

Example of feature headlines

Question headline – “Who is the Merchant of Death?”

Human interest headline – “Diana’s ring seals Prince William’s Marriage Plans”

How to headline – “Holiday Dishes Fit for a Diabetic”

### **6.8.2 Tips for Composing Feature Headline**

Tonality of a feature headline is conversational and builds up interest among readers. Feature headlines need to present information which is engaging prompting readers to go further. It must not be long and have creativity to trigger questions in the mind of readers. Like the Diana’s ring related headline above which uses the person’s name upfront given the popularity and therefore reader attention. It also raises queries related to the ring, its connection with the marriage and such aspects. Superlative expressions are advised to be avoided and simple words used. Strong anchoring points should be presented in the headline.

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## **6.9 HEADLINE DO’S AND DON’TS**

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To write a good headline requires understanding of both the science and the art of the job. It is on the headline that readers decide either to read or skip a story. Also news headlines will have to be factual while feature headlines will be curiosity igniting and creative. To balance all aspects, writers need to remain aware about what to do right and what to avoid:

Do’s

- Crisp and simple
- Consider the likings of target audience
- Consider position of the headline, its weight and value of news story
- Avoid superlative words or technical jargons
- Keep it precise
- Use of numerics if required
- From multiple drafts the best should be selected by writer

Don’t

- Use auxiliary verb
- Use articles
- Express numbers in words

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## **6.10 HEADLINES IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD**

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Writing a headline for online newsletters, magazines, blogs etc has different approach from that for print media. In the former keywords need to be assessed and inserted in headline so that it shows up in search results. Standardization of templates and font styles is advised as it lends consistency.

### 6.10.1 Features of Internet Headlines

Headlines of internet publication need to fulfill two key functions. One, it must satiate the research urge of readers. Headlines should be so framed that readers can find articles they are seeking to gather specific information. Identification of keywords, and its use in headlines, assumes significance as it helps readers in locating relevant articles. Second, headline should be interesting to hold onto reader attention and not lose it instantly. It should implore readers to finish reading the piece.

Good headlines generally appear on top of the Search Engine Returns Pages (SERP), which means the pages supplied by search engines post search initiation by readers. Below par headlines rank at the bottom of search results. Here keyword play a pivotal part as matching of keywords of search action and that contained in headlines brings the articles to readers. Therefore good high quality headlines have the precise keywords which ensure optimal use of search engines. Web headlines needs to be short and not more than ten words. Maximum characters should not be more than 70 and anything beyond this limit is cropped by Google systems.

Unlike print media, online media generally uses two font sizes to have some degree of standardization which eases readability and gives the page distinctness. The main landing page has content in large fonts while vertical related pages display content in smaller font size. This approach enables online page managers to optimally use space and show readers content variety in one frame. News value in headlines also differs between print and online publications. In the former case, headlines are rich in specific information about a subject. In online space, attractiveness of the news is taken into consideration. This is attributable to content being sought by users. Editors of online magazines and publications therefore monitor preferences in different territories and produce content accordingly. Print media editors however are more independent in their editorial decision.

### 6.10.2 Divergence – Print and Online Media

Placement of the headline is a major point of difference with those of online publications being everywhere and not restricted to a specific point. It can be appear as a pop-up link which when clicked guides readers to the story or as a scroll in either the left or right panel. In print media however, headline comes along with the story. There is no other way for this. Also font size variety is more in print media than among online magazines or others. For the former tweaking of font sizes enables news differentiation as per their value. It is drafted in accordance with weight, width and importance in keeping with vitality of the subject in the article. Social Media Optimization and Search Engine Optimization determine the font size of online headlines.

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## 6.11 LET US SUM UP

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Headlines and leads are what attracts readers and engages them to read a story. Headlines create the first impression by introducing the subject and leads intriguing them into reading further. In the hands of editors headlines and leads are thus tools to ‘market’ a story. Leads, though with some

variations, follow the inverted pyramid approach and inform readers about the event a report narrates. Headlines present interesting facts briefly so that readers feel interested. As such leads provide information about what, when, who, where, why and how, also known as 5Ws and 1H. Depending on the lead readers decide about reading or giving it a skip. Summary, Single Item, Delayed Identification, Anecdotal and Analogy, Observational and Question are the different lead types determined by the information being communicated.

Headline is placed above a story, in the print format, and presents a brief about the subject and facts of the story. It reports facts or specific information for news reports and the significance of any happening or event for feature reports. Headline should be so drafted that it can communicate the key message to a reader without being verbose.

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## 6.12 KEYWORDS

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**Shoulder Prop :** Placed above principle headline and smaller in font size.

**Stropline :** Follows the headline and is placed below it.

**Crosshead :** Summarizes the important news points in the paragraphs it precedes.

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## 6.12 FURTHER READINGS

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## 6.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. A lead is defined as the opening paragraph of a news story which is crisp and has the role of grabbing the reader's attention. It is an outline of what will follow in the subsequent paragraphs in detail. The Inverted Pyramid approach and Subject-Verb-Object Principles are applied.
2. All lead writers follow the Inverted Pyramid which consists of 5Ws and 1H. These are what, when, who, where, why and how.



### **Check Your Progress 2**

1. A headline is referred to the story head place at the start of the content. It is placed across the story columns with appropriate weight and width. It is placed in large fonts sharing details of the story to attract readers.
2. Headline is the title of a news story. It is placed on the top of every news story and is meant to inform readers about the story and attract them into reading it. Besides presenting the central message of a story, it aids readers decide whether they would like to read the news or not. It is composed in bold and bigger font size than the story body text.
3. The best way to write an attention grabbing headline is to understand the story fully. Thus, having got a good idea of the story, the sub-editor is able to reflect it correctly in the headline.

### **Check Your Progress 3**

1. Headlines can be of different types like direct, indirect, emotional, command, news and question.
2. Headline which clearly defines the outline of an article is known as direct headline. When a headline carries subtle indications about the central message of an article, it is known as indirect headline.
3. Headlines which communicate to readers what they can learn from reading a specific article is known as command headlines. When headlines tend to appeal to a positive or negative sentiment or feeling among readers to induce them to read the full article is known as emotional headline.
4. A headline which presents vital announcement about any company or its products and services is known as news headline.