

COMMUNICATION

# Understanding news headlines

**LEVEL**

Intermediate (B1)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B1\_2111X

**LANGUAGE**

English

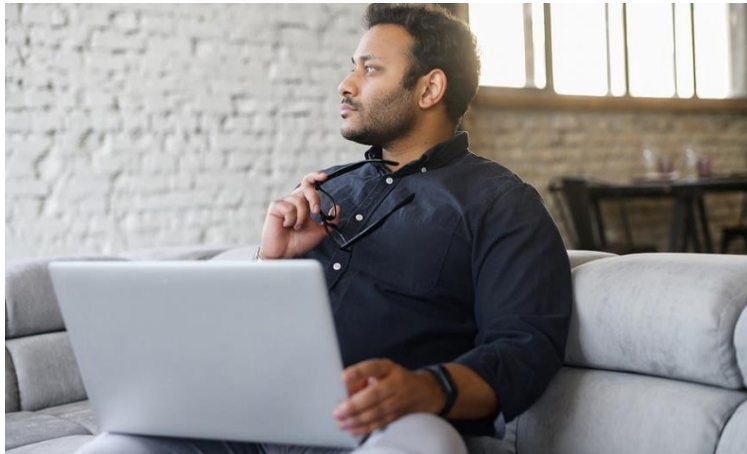
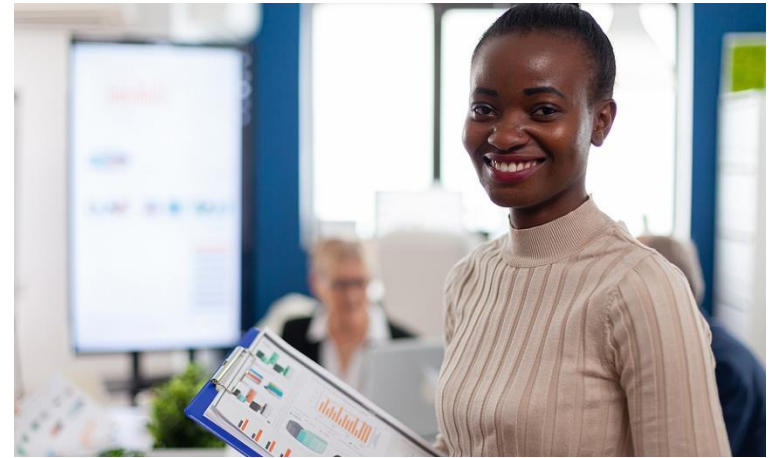
## Learning outcomes

- I can identify and explain the characteristics of a news headline.
- I can read a variety of news headlines and predict the contents of the story.



## Warm-up

**How do you get most of your news? TV, radio, the internet?**



**Describe a newspaper that you like to read. Explain why you like to read it.**



# Headlines

1. **Read** these 5 headlines.
2. **Answer** the questions in the box below.

1. Scientists find mouse thought extinct for 100 years on island
2. Former president to break her silence about ex-husband in book
3. Man finds painting worth millions in abandoned building
4. Steve Milford, creator of hit TV series 'Police', dies at 87
5. Five key takeaways from local election



1. What do you think the articles for each headline are about? Discuss your ideas with the rest of the class.
2. Which tense (**past, present, future**) is used in these headlines?





What were **the key takeaways** from the debate?

He is going to **break his silence**.

**The key takeaways** are the main pieces of information.

When someone **breaks their silence**, they voice an opinion on something after avoiding doing so.

# Understanding headlines

1. **Read** the headline.
2. **Answer** the question in the blue box.

**Scientists find a type of mouse that was thought to be extinct for 100 years living on an island**



**Scientists find mouse thought extinct for 100 years on island**

- What words have been removed from the headline on the left to create the headline on the right?



# Understanding headlines

1. **Read** the headline.
2. **Answer** the question in the blue box.

**The former president will break her silence about her ex-husband in a book**



**Former president to break her silence about ex-husband in book**

- What words have been removed from the headline on the left to create the headline on the right?



# A closer look at headlines

1. **Read** the headlines. 2. **Review** the information in the blue boxes below.

Scientists found **a** type of mouse that **was** thought to be extinct for 100 years living on **an** island

**The** former president **will** break her silence about her ex-husband in **a** book



Scientists find mouse thought extinct for 100 years on island



Former president to break her silence about ex-husband in book

- The verb **'to be'** is left out of headlines.
- **Articles** are often not included in headlines.

- Infinitives are often used to describe future events.
- Can you find the infinitive in one of the sentences on the right?





# Practise identifying effective headlines

Choose the headline below the description that is more effective. Explain your decision.

1 The lion escaped from the zoo

a. Lion escapes zoo

b. Lion has escaped from zoo

2 A local woman won the jackpot last night

a. Local woman won the jackpot

b. Local woman wins jackpot

3 Scientists are going to announce that they discovered a new planet

a. Scientists will announce discovery of new planet

b. Scientists to announce discovery of new planet



# Discuss

**Answer** these questions as a group or in breakout rooms.

**What makes a headline good or bad in your opinion?**



**How are headlines written in your language?**



# Effective headline verbs

**Match** the verbs on the left with their **definition** on the right.

1

**to face**

**a**

to put in prison

2

**to boost**

**b**

to promise to do something

3

**to vow**

**c**

to deal with something, usually a problem

4

**to cut**

**d**

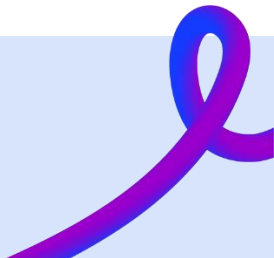
to make something smaller, shorter, lower, etc.

5

**to jail**

**e**

to improve or increase something





# Match the image to the headline

Read the headlines on the right and see if you can match them with the correct image.

1



2



a Bank robber jailed for 10 years

b New school to open in August

3



4



c Mayor vows to lower crime in city

d Speaker boosts interest in community project

5



6



e Carnival faces large fines after failing safety test

f Oil surplus cuts diesel prices in half



# Review

**Read this review** before moving on to the next slide.

- The verb 'to be' is often left out of headlines.
- Articles are usually not included in headlines.
- Infinitives are used to describe future events instead of 'will' or 'going to'.
- Headlines are usually written in the present simple tense.
- Can you remember some effective verbs that can be used in headlines?





# Write headlines

**Read the articles** and **write headlines** for them. Share you headlines with the rest of the class.

A local farmer has been fined after claiming that his brown cow, Vanessa, could produce chocolate milk. The farmer sold tickets for 50 euros to people who wanted to see Vanessa. The tickets also included a tour of the farm and a glass of chocolate milk.



A 12-year-old girl from Denver, Colorado has been named the winner of the TV programme, *America's Great Talent Show*. She is the youngest winner to date and will receive one million dollars for her trampoline act. Trampoline sales in the U.S. have already doubled.



# Time to talk!

Take turns choosing a question **below** and **ask a classmate** to find out more about them.



- How much time per day do you spend reading the news?
- What's the last news story you read?
- How do you decide what news stories to read, watch, or listen to?
- Do you usually finish reading articles that you start? Or do you stop somewhere in the middle?
- Do you read more news now than when you were younger? Or did you read more news in the past?
- Have you ever been in the news?



# End of the lesson

Idiom

***No news is good news.***

**Meaning:** If you don't hear any news, then you can assume that nothing is wrong.

**Example:** We haven't heard anything yet from the hospital, but I guess no news is good news.



# Additional practice





# True or false

Read each statement and decide if it **is true or false**.

		True	False
1	Articles are often left out of headlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The verb <i>to be</i> is always included in headlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Headlines often use the present tense form to describe actions in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Infinitives are used to describe future events instead of <i>will</i> or <i>going to</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Headlines do not have to be grammatically correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Write your own headlines

**Look** at each of the pictures and **write a short headline**. **Compare** your answers. Are they similar or different? **Discuss** the grammar of your headlines.

1



4



2



5



3



6



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# Transform the sentences

**Transform** these sentences into **effective headlines**. **Explain** the changes you've made.

1 The mayor opened a new school yesterday.



Mayor opens new school

2 The main road will be closed for two weeks.



3 The police arrested the criminal outside the bank.



4 A family's holiday was ruined by the bad weather.



5 A 14-year-old boy has won the regional tennis tournament.



6 The museum will be free to enter for the next two weeks.





# Discussing headline stories

Use these **pictures** from the activity on page 19 to practise using new vocabulary from the lesson. Use the words in the red box to discuss the stories.



**small car  
crash**



**big casino  
win**



**team loses  
game**



**billionaire in  
space**

*The police have vowed to...*

*The money will boost...*

- the key takeaways
- to vow
- to break one's silence
- to face
- to boost
- to cut
- to jail



# Answer key

**P.4:** 2.) The headlines are written in the present tense

**P.6:** The following words have been removed from the first headline: a, of, that was, to be, living, an

**P.7:** The following words have been removed from the second headline: the, will, her, a

**P.8:** The infinitive can be found in the second headline on the right: to break her silence

**P.9:** 1. (a.); written in the present tense 2. (b.); written in the present tense 3. (b.) the infinitive is used

**P.11:** 1. (c.) 2. (e.) 3. (b.) 4. (d.) 5. (a.)

**P.12:** 1. (e.) 2. (d.) 3. (c.) 4. (f.) 5. (b.) 6. (a.)

**P. 19:** 1.) true, 2.) false, 3.) true, 4.) true, 5.) true

**p. 21:** 2.) Main road to be closed for two weeks 3.) Police arrest criminal outside bank 4.) Family's holiday ruined by bad weather 5.) 14-year old boy wins regional tennis tournament 6.) Museum to be free for next two weeks





# Summary

## What is a headline?

- A short piece of written information in newspapers
- They tell us what an article or story is about
- Headlines do not have to be grammatical sentences

## Writing effective headlines

- Leave out articles (*a, an* and *the*)
- Leave out the verb 'to be' (*am/is/was/were*)
- Use infinitive verb forms instead of *will* and *going to* for the future

## Headline examples

- Coffee shop to sell ice coffee only because of hot weather
- Man finds dinosaur fossil in garden
- New player to play for football club in next game

## Useful headline verbs

- to face, to boost
- to vow, to cut
- to jail, to break one's silence



# Vocabulary

key takeaways

to face

to boost

to vow

to cut

to jail

to break one's silence

