
UNIT 9 HEADLINE AND LEAD WRITING

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9.0 INTRODUCTION

A headline is a heading consisting of words and phrases falling above the story in a newspaper, magazine, newsletter, or website. In radio or TV, a headline is spoken just before the news story is broadcast. A headline's role is to generate audience engagement by catching their attention. To draw the attention of the audience, editors also use pictorial illustrations or a quote from the story.

A lead is the first paragraph of the story. After the headline, it is the most informative and impactful part of the entire story. Its role is to lead the audience into the story's main body.

The headline may have an element of surprise or awe aimed at generating reader's interest and the lead satiates that interest as well as enhances the level of user-satisfaction.

Structured like an inverted pyramid, it is used as a metaphor to convey the prioritization of information organized in the descending order of importance. This can also be seen as a triangle upside down with the top most part communicating the most important as well as interesting part of the story and the lowermost layer representing the least significant information in terms of news elements. A failure to write the lead containing the most important information of the story reduces its impact and is known as *burying the lead*.

Leads and headlines are required to be responsible in terms of factual information and witty without compromising on the nature or significance of the story. Most headlines are written by a copy editor and not the reporter filing the story. Having gone through the story, the copy editor comes up with words and phrases which match best with the story and summarizes it in a witty way to draw the attention of his potential readers.

Writing leads and headlines is a craft that comes with experience and hard work. A headline can be subjective in its approach to the story but the lead and the main body remain objective without doubt.

9.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading the Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the process of writing leads and headlines;
- describe their key elements; and
- explain the factors shaping their structure and length.

9.2 LEADS

Next only to headlines, leads play a significant part in convincing people to read the news story. Not that creativity is not a consideration at all but the foundation of writing a good lead continues to be its objectivity and the factual content. To avoid information overload, a good lead is better written within 30-40 words.

9.2.1 Definition of a Lead

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.

9.2.2 The 5Ws and 1H Approach:

All lead writers follow the 5Ws (WHAT, WHEN, WHO, WHERE, WHY) and 1-H (HOW) approach. Having already read the headline, one wants to know more about the story. This quest for knowing more decides the content of the lead. The four- Ws (who, what, where, when) -and -one- H (how) technique is employed to convey the factual details of the story.

The *why*, however, helps in getting to the core of the issue and its reason for happening.

- WHO: This involves giving answers to questions such as 'Who all are involved?'
- WHAT: 'What is the story all about?' type questions govern this component of the lead.
- WHEN: Information about the date and time of the happening of the story or the scheduled date and time of the event constitutes this part of the lead.
- WHERE: The place of the event is also to be included.
- WHY: Facts about the reason for the occurrence of certain things or events are also mentioned in the lead so that the quality of the story is enriched.
- HOW: Giving answers to questions such as 'How the series of events unfolded?' constitutes this part of the lead.

9.2.3 Subject-Verb-Object Approach

For the reader's clarity, lead writers usually follow a subject-verb-object sentence structure that makes the idea of the lead straightforward. Consequently, using active rather than passive voice is the most favoured way of writing a lead sentence.

Examples:

- *"Three people were killed on Tuesday...."* Alternatively, *"Three people died...."* would also be acceptable.
- *Two people were arrested.* An alternative approach begins with the police: *The police arrested two people.*

Adjectives and adverbs tend to dilute the impact of the story by reducing clarity and adding subjectivity to it. Hence their use is minimized to the extent possible.

Activity 1: Pickup today's newspaper and identify seven 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. Define Lead. What are the approaches to writing a Lead?

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2. What is 5W & 1H Lead?

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3. Explain the Subject-Verb-Object approach of writing a Lead.

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9.3 KINDS OF LEADS-I

Depending upon the content structure, leads may be classified as Summary Lead, Descriptive Lead, Question Lead and Caption Lead.

9.3.1 Summary Lead

Its objective is to convey main idea of the story to the reader. It covers most of the 5-Ws and 1-H and may also give an idea of what is likely to happen in future. A professional reporter would ensure that the main points of the story are covered in the lead. Failure to do so results in a situation known as buried lead or delayed lead which is thought to be the proof of the reporter's inability to determine the significance of the story.

It needs to be emphasized that the lead is the opening paragraph in hard news stories but not necessarily in feature stories wherein the lead is kept generally in the middle of the main body of the story. The idea is to add an element of surprise to it.

Example:

- *Two children were killed today when a car jumped the road divider near Nehru Park in Central Delhi and ran them down. Ten others in the group were injured with two in critical condition.*

9.3.2 Descriptive Lead

As the name suggests, this type of lead is more descriptive and explanatory. It is used to explain a person, or a scene or an event in detail in response to *where* and *who* questions. A well-written descriptive lead is a picture-in-words description giving the audience a feeling of being on the spot where the news happened.

Examples:

- *Before going into a trance, Mrs Pamela Chowdhary slowly murmured five, four, three, two, one, and gave birth to a ten-pound baby girl.*
- *The government offensive launched to clear roving ISIS guerrillas has started giving results.*

Moreover, to get insights for describing the event lucidly, it is better to contact various eyewitnesses.

9.3.3 Question Lead

It is said that newspaper readers look for answers in a story. Hence leads posing questions are generally avoided. However, a proactive question can be used to generate interest and the answer to which is found in one or more of the following paragraphs making the body of the story.

Examples:

- *What happened in the city of Delhi in the afternoon of 1st November 1984? Who all were involved and how did they harm the community?*
- *Mr Chowksi had fled the country without a valid passport.*

9.3.4 Punch/Caption Lead

In this type of lead, strong verbs and direct sentences are used with the objective of creating maximum impact. Such an impact is achieved by jolting the readers with action words written in a simple way.

Examples:

- *The Chancellor is dead.*
- *The RBI suffers monetary crisis.*

The caption lead comes handy when the copy writer is armed with an unexpected piece of information that has to be conveyed in a hard-hitting manner.

Example:

- *Neither trees nor birds. All gone.*

The above lead about the ill-effects of deforestation will be highly impactful. Punch leads are used sparingly so that their impact in terms of shock to the readers is retained.

9.4 KINDS OF LEADS II

Leads can also be categorized based upon the subject or context of the content. Quotation Lead, Contrast Lead, Staccato Lead and You Lead.

9.4.1 Quotation Lead

Quotes provide colour and credibility to the story by recording the facts as they come from the news maker. But quotes are generally paraphrased to drop the words which may decrease the story's impact. The other objective of paraphrasing is to save the newspaper space and so also the reader's time. However, no paraphrasing is allowed at the cost of intent and the meaning of the quote that is generally intended to add an element of interest such as surprise, humour, contrast or compassion to the story.

Example:

- *In 1998, the Indian PM Atal Behari Vajpayee said to his fellow parliamentarians: Governments will come and go but the country must remain intact.*

9.4.2 Contrast Lead

This type of lead is based on drawing comparisons between two situations. Such comparisons between what was happening then and what is happening now, between old age and youth or even between what is happening elsewhere and what is happening here—the location of news event.

Example:

- *Two years ago, two school friends pooled in their pocket money to start a website to provide doctors' service online. Today that website has 2 million unique visitors and 100,000 regular clients.*

9.4.3 Staccato Lead

Staccato lead is used when the time element is at the prime focus and the most important information is in the last line. To communicate the progression in time, a series of phrases with recurring punctuation marks are used. Its structure is similar to that of a descriptive lead.

Example:

- *Almost thirty years ago, back in 1989, after years of uninterrupted happiness in her country home, the light went out of Mrs Divya's life - she lost her eyesight completely. This year in May her prayers were answered suddenly - now she could see.*

9.4.4 You Lead

You Lead addresses the reader directly. It may be written as a question being asked to the reader or a statement that connects with the reader directly. Implications of the news event may also be used to develop You Lead.

Example:

- *If you are an empathetic leader, you will easily identify the signs of whether your subordinate wants to quit or is just bored.*

9.4.5 Blind Identification Lead

In this type of lead, the identification of the newsmaker is dropped or delayed because what has happened to him is of importance even though he is not a well

known person in his community. However, his name is used in the main body of the story. This is done to ensure that the relevance and the news value of the story are not lost.

Examples:

- *A 90-year-old man* instead of his name.
- *An army commando's son was attacked on Mall Road this morning. The victim Kailash, 15, has been admitted to AIIMS Trauma Centre where his condition is said to be critical.*

Activity 2: Pick up today's newspaper and identify one story each with

- a) You Lead.
- b) Blind Lead
- c) Staccato Lead
- d) Contrast Lead

Check Your Progress 2

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 are the different kinds of Leads?

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2. What is the difference between Question Lead and Caption Lead?

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3. Distinguish between Summary Lead and Descriptive lead.

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4. Descriptive Lead is similar to 5Ws & 1H approach of writing a Lead. Explain

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9.5 HEADLINE AND ITS FUNCTIONS

Headline is the title of a news story. It is placed on the top of every news story to serve as the heading for the content written below. Apart from providing the crux of the news content, it helps the reader decide whether the news story is of interest to him or not. It is written in bold and bigger type face than the body of news story.

9.5.1 What is a Headline?

A headline is defined as the heading of a news story or article. It is generally placed on the top of the story, printed in large type and gives the news succinctly in an attention-grabbing manner. The high-visibility characteristic of headlines lets them influence the look and appeal of the newspaper as well as its identification from a distance.

The presentation of a news story is dependent not only on writing its headline but also on its font, font size and the position on the page.

9.5.2 Functions of a Headline

1. *To attract the audience attention:* Generating reader's interest is one of the most important functions of a good headline. A headline on a topic of interest to the reader should be able to lead him to read the news story or the article. This is possible when the reader finds something new or something that he has been looking for. However, a headline should not be misleading the reader. It happens when the reader does not get what he was expecting from the story in the later paragraphs.
2. *To figure out your readers:* A headline must be able to persuade the potential readers who are attracted to it if the story is in public interest and the headline is presented in an interesting manner.
3. *To convey a message which is complete:* A headline must not be ambiguous and incomplete. It has to be informative and complete. However, an ambiguous headline may work if a graphic or a picture supports it. Most people read headlines rather than the entire news story or article. Hence a headline must ensure that a fine balance between the crispiness and informative-ness is maintained.
4. *To facilitate the reader in reading the whole story:* Humour and surprise are used to generate curiosity in the headline. This is generally achieved through a question or a colourful quote being used as the headline in itself.

- *Top 5 tips of the magazine publishing trade.*
- *Who stole his heart?*
- *Bye-bye Advani Ji.*

9.6 HEADLINE WRITING PROCESS

Writing a headline involves both the literary and technical aspects. Font size, positioning of text, font style, width of the text and presentation are some of the technical considerations. Selection of words, sentence structure and the headline type are some of the literary aspects.

9.6.1 Display and Point Size

Headlines have to be designed to fit into the allotted space. Thus in a three-column (3-col) story, the headline must occupy three columns of type. In larger publications, generally one of the editors is assigned the job of determining the headline size, while others decide the headline content.

A shorthand communication as 2-36-2 (two- thirty six-two) means that the story has two columns requiring a 36 point (pt) head arranged in two lines. Such a headline is also known as a double-decker head in the newsroom or the production department.

Shorthand for headlines is written in the following sequence: number of columns, the type size and the number of lines. The height of type size is measured in points while its width is measured in picas. The type sizes are standard. A type size, which is equal to or smaller than about 12 pt., is best used for *body text* and is rarely used for headlines. Larger than this point is used for headlines that follow a font size in the range of 14-84. Such headlines are also known as *display type*.

9.6.2 Width, Weight, and Style

Width of a headline is decided based on the newspaper columns allotted to the news story. When a headline is bigger than the column space provided, double-decker headline is used i.e., it is split in two lines instead of one. Setting the distance between letters, known as *Kerning* the text, also helps reduce space between the words, allowing the headline to fit into the given width.

The bolder the font the greater is the weight of the headline. Weight of a headline suggests the priority given to the news story by the editor. Weight is also related to the font style chosen for writing the headline, e.g., a story written in *Light* / *Semi Light* style has lesser weight than that written in *Condensed* or *Bold*.

Similarly, the font style also helps to decide the weight of a news story. The headlines in *sans serif* font styles are soft news or feature news stories. The headlines in *serif* fonts have more weight. Newspapers using *sans serif* fonts only, opt for a font family providing them a variety of font styles and weights.

9.6.3 Deciding News Angle

Generally, News Angle means perspective based on some element or point of the story. For example, a story can be written from the perspective of the people or

the government or some institution or a group of people. Essentially it is the spin you impart to the story. You can give it a new angle by changing the context. Say you saw two people kissing under a lamppost in your campus. They could be unmarried lovers or husband-wife in a married hostel. Your angle could be *love-and-studies go hand-in-hand* or just *love in the name of studies*.

9.6.4 Writing the Headline

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. Under headline pressures, most sub-editors/copy editors only read the opening lines of the story to come up with a headline. At times, a fact or a figure buried in the body text can also be used as a selling point in the headline.

After writing the headline, one should always get a third-person to check it for its language and impact. Headlines using redundant words are best-dropped. Similarly, ambiguity has no place in headlines. Moreover, headlines contradicting the story are not to be used at all.

Activity 3: 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. What is a Headline?

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2. What is the significance of a Headline?

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3. What process must be followed while writing a Headline?

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9.7 KINDS OF HEADLINES

Headlines can be classified into various categories based on their structure, context, presentation and positioning.

9.7.1 Label Headline

This type of headline does not have a verb. It is a label and is similar to a book title. In short, a headline without a verb is called a label headline.

Examples:

- *This year's Padma awards.*
- *A season of Holi festivities.*

A label headline is a rarity and is used in newspapers to show neutrality in its approach to the story. A label is neutral in its approach and is easily searchable in a database.

Example:

- *PM's stand shows vengeance* can be label-headed as *The PM's stand.*

9.7.2 Descriptive Headline

A descriptive headline is the one which describes the gist of a news story. It majorly focuses on 4Ws and 1H (*who, what, when, where, how*) while the *why* part of the story is often not part of the headline. Descriptive headlines are also called as *How to* headline when they are used for explaining the step-wise process of doing something.

Examples:

- *How to form an Investing habit.*
- *Chennai team develops device to test anti-biotic resistance in just 6 hours.*

9.7.3 Comment Headline

A comment headline is the one that interprets the news partly. It adds extra meaning to the headline by looking for something that is going on behind the scenes or by analyzing the implications of the news immediately or in the long run. Comment does add colour to the headline and thus enhances its impact. The trend of using comment in headline is growing these days.

Example:

- *Desperate Pakistan wants to sabotage the Indian bid in the FATF.*

9.7.4 Quotation Headline

A quotation headline is the one that uses quotes in order that its impact is not reduced or lost after it is paraphrased. A quote is not a story in itself and hence is used to emphasize a news angle or news point. That is why quotes are used sparsely in headlines.

Examples:

- *I didnot kill her and I do not want to be hanged.*
- *I am in full command and will get a second term: PM*

9.7.5 Question Headline

A question headline is the one that evokes curiosity and highlights speculative points or provokes the reader. It is also good for pro-and-con stories. Many professionals do not favour it because it leaves the reader guessing whereas the job of a headline is to make sure that its meaning is grasped clearly.

Examples:

- *Is Shatrughan Sinha on his way out?*
- *Who is number 2 in Rahul's kitchen cabinet?*

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. What are the various kinds of Headlines?

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2. Distinguish between Comment and Quotation Headlines.

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3. What is a Question Headline? How is it different from Descriptive Headline?

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4. What do you understand by Label Headlines?

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9.8 HEADLINE PROPS

Headline props are referred to as supporting headlines that provide the much needed extra words and space to make the headline more meaningful. These headline props come in different formats serving different purposes. It is well-known that a news report structured in an inverted pyramid style lifts the most important news point to the top of the story known as lead or intro. That is why most headlines are built on the news point contained in the lead. However, several news reports-especially developing and analytical stories- are built on more than one news point. In such cases, headline writers take the most important point in the main headline and use a headline prop to draw attention to the remaining important points.

In this sense, headline props are supporting headlines. Headline props can be categorized as follows:

9.8.1 Shoulder or Kicker

A shoulder or kicker is a supporting headline placed on top of the main headline and is smaller in size by definition. Earlier, it was used to highlight the subject of the story but these days it is also used to highlight the news points not contained in the main headline.

Examples:

- Shoulder: *India makes contact to meet negotiator today*; Main headline: *Iraq captors give 24 more hours*. In a newspaper, it is printed as follows:

India makes contact to meet negotiator today

Iraq captors give 24 more hours

9.8.2 Strapline

In terms of its positioning, a strapline may be defined as the reverse of kicker or shoulder as it is placed beneath the main headline. Other attributes of strapline are almost the same as that of a kicker or a shoulder. A strapline works as an extra hook to draw the reader into a story. This is done by providing additional information that makes it easy for the readers who are in a hurry to scan the day's headlines. Usually, a strapline is used in a single column format just below the main headline and its point size is kept less than that of the main headline. This difference in point size helps the reader to tell the main points of the news story from its subsidiary points. Like shoulders of the page, straplines are set in reverse and against colour backgrounds to add to the appeal of the page.

Examples:

- Main headline: *Sensex gains 40 points*; Strapline: *Revival of monsoons has done the magic*.

Straplines may also be used to link the related news reports, published the same day or on subsequent days. This is done through the use of a keyword to indicate that the reports are related. Thus when a former Miss India, Nafisa Joseph, committed suicide, her first name 'Nafisa' was used to link all the reports on the subject. To separate the link word from the rest of the strapline, the former (link word) is capitalized.

Example:

- Main headline: *She packed her bags, was ready to leave*; Strapline: *NAFISA: Was to marry next week, Mom blames fiancé for her suicide.*

In a newspaper, it may appear as follows:

She packed her bags, was ready to leave

NAFISA: Was to marry next week, Mom blames fiancé for her suicide

- Main headline: 'She touched us with her elegance'; Strapline: NAFISA: An MTV colleague recounts...

9.8.3 Crosshead

A crosshead's role is to help sustain the reader's interest in a long story by breaking its monotony. A crosshead is written in a point size generally two points more than the body type.

Positioned in between the running text and done so after three to five paragraphs, its objective is to capture the most important news point contained in the paragraphs over which it is placed.

A crosshead, though it cannot be called a headline prop in the strict sense of the term, breaks the visual monotony of the text when the story is quite long. It does so by giving the readers an idea of what is to be expected in the paragraphs following it (crosshead). Notably, few newspapers are found using crossheads in news reports these days.

9.8.4 Sidehead

Positioned at the start of a paragraph, a sidehead is set in bold though its point size generally matches with that of the body text. It introduces a new point in the running story and can also be used as a headline for a news item in segments such as *city briefs* or *crime briefs*.

Like crosshead, a sidehead is not a headline prop in the strict sense of the term. It functions as a headline prop nonetheless.

9.8.5 Navigation

Limited to one or two words, a navigation head guides readers to the stories of their interest. It is placed in the middle of a running story to highlight its subject by breaking the greyness of body text. It releases space for the main and can be visual too.

9.9 FEATURE HEADLINES

Feature headlines are used for feature stories or soft news stories. They are different from the headlines used for hard news stories. Instead of relying on facts of the news content solely, these also add a surprise or colour factor for the reader.

9.9.1 Difference from News Headlines

A feature story, unlike hard news, has a more personalized and subjective approach to the subject. Consequently, more adjectives and verbs are allowed in feature

headlines which can be witty and have in them an element of surprise. All this lends flexibility in the use of font and colour in headlines that may not be in the same font or colour as that of the body text.

Here a more stylized approach is followed which is in sync with the mood of the story.

Examples:

Here is a headline of a Hindustan Times story on Prakash Karat (General Secretary, CPI-M) and his wife Brinda Karat (Member, CPI-M Politbureau).

Profile: CPI(M)'s *First Couple*

Comrades at work and home

Another headline to a story published in the New Indian Express. It plays on words and uses a strapline to convey the intended meaning.

MEN too must **PAUSE**

What happens to men between the ages of 40 and 55?

9.9.2 Tips to Write Feature Headlines

A feature headline is written in a style that is conversational, engaging, informative and full of anticipation. Neither too long nor in an inappropriate font, a feature headline should be crafted in such a way that it gives the feel of the beginning of a conversation between two friends. While the language could be reasonably emotive, its wording should be simple with superlatives avoided to the extent possible. Usually the brand names are kept out of the content so that it does not look like sponsored piece. However, it is advisable to highlight the interesting part of the story.

9.10 HEADLINE WRITING: DO'S AND DO NOTS

Writing headline is a process and writing a good headline involves both art and science. News headline represents the face of a news story. It helps the reader filter and decide whether the news story is worth reading. Some of the important Do's and Dont's that need to be kept in mind while writing news headlines are listed here.

9.10.1 Headline Writing: Do's and Do nots

1. Keep it short and simple.
2. Remember your target audience/ reader.
3. Keep the placement, positioning and currency of the news story in mind.
4. Avoid Jargons.
5. Be specific.
6. Use numerals for numbers instead of words.
7. Avoid using auxiliary verbs (is, are) and articles (a, an, the).
8. Past events are reported in the present tense.

9. Use popular acronyms, if any.
10. Write multiple headlines and choose one.

9.11 INTERNET HEADLINES

Headlines for news stories posted online differ from offline news headlines. Internet headlines need to consider the search keywords and serve the purpose of marketing news content. Font style variation is also limited for online news stories as the website/ online platforms use a single template. A consistent template allows users ease of access while optimizing the search for content.

9.11.1 Characteristics of Internet Headlines

The dual functionality of the headline:

It should take care of not only the gratification-need of the reader but also the research-engine requirements. For this to happen, the headline must be structured appropriately and worded correctly. Acting as a gateway to a good online story, the headline must be click-able and search-able. The web engine separates good headlines from the bad ones by ranking them in terms of SERP (Search Engine Returns Pages) that are defined as pages displayed by search engines in response to a query by a searcher. The main component of the SERP is the listing of results that are returned by the search engine in response to a keyword query though the pages may also contain other results such as advertisements.

Good web headlines contain the correct keywords that are appropriately positioned. In terms of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) marketing, this attribute is known as frontloading of the headlines.

Headlines should be short and crisp:

A web friendly headline should not exceed 6-10 words that do not exceed 70 characters beyond which it (headline) is digitally cropped by Google into a truncated headline.

Limited variation in Point Size

Here only two-point sizes are employed. The headlines featuring on the landing page are in large point size, while those on the home page and category page are in reduced point size(s). This helps in generating more traffic through the placement of more than one story on a single frame of computer screen. This also helps in enabling a number of tabs and categories.

Web headlines operate on newness, not news values

The web news headlines are written in response to the demands of the online user. Hence the editor goes by the data analytics reflecting a particular geography or demography or both. Traditional news values and editorial judgement based on them take a backseat in the age of personalization and hyper-interactivity facilitated by digital convergence of communication.

9.11.2 Difference from Print Headlines

The objective of writing a good story is to get the right audience to read it. It is easy to get the timely attention of the target audience if it is segmented appropriately and the story is well understood. The print and web headlines are different from each other in the following ways:

- A web headline is placed across the web whereas a newspaper headline is placed right above the news story. The web headline is found irrespective of where the news story or the article is located. The surfer clicks on the headline to read the story that is hyperlinked to the headline that may or may not be located above the story on the same web page. But for this to happen, the web headline has to be exciting enough to the viewer.
- In a newspaper, a variety of fonts and font sizes are applied to headlines to display the relative importance of a news story. Though the attributes of width, weight, font of the print headline are customized for use in web headlines, their popularity is governed by the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SMO (Social Media Optimization) ratings of news stories. Rigorous SEO and SMO are done on the story to maximize its reach.
- Usually in specific font size, the print headlines can not be changed at will while the web headlines can be altered as per the requirements of the landing page.
- The positioning of web headlines is dynamic, unlike that in print. The most important print news story goes on the top of the page whereas the display of the web headlines is decided as per the time of the happening.

9.12 LET US SUM UP

The headlines and leads are ‘advertorial’ in nature and are gateways to the news stories and articles. By advertorial here it is meant that headlines and leads are the kind of editorial content that is tasked with the job of advertising the story to its audience. News stories follow an inverted pyramid approach according to which the most important information is given in the first paragraph and the less important bits of information are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

The first paragraph is also known as the lead of the story. It tries to answer most of the 5 Ws (*what, when, who, where, why*) and 1 H (*how*) of the story. As the most important paragraph, it draws the readers to the main body text of the story. Depending on the nature of the story and the treatment given to it, the lead can be of various types such as *Summary, Descriptive, Question, Punch, Quotation, Contrast, Staccato, Blind Identification* and *You* lead.

A headline is a title or heading placed before the beginning of the story. It gives a peep into the story with an element of surprise. Headlines are of various types such as *Label, Descriptive, Quotation, and Question* headline. The headline acts as a gateway to the story and its main function is to attract as many readers as possible.

Along with this is the newly developed platform of the web which has the grammar, treatment and sentence structure of its headlines a bit different from the print ones. The web headlines are short and crisp; have to meet the SEO and SMO requirements to maximize the reach of the story.

9.13 KEYWORDS/HEADLINE WORDS

- *Abandon*: drop, give up, skip, quit, yield
- *Abatement*: cut, decline, drop, ebb, fall, slump
- *Abbreviate*: chop, cut, lop, shorten, slash, squash

- *Abscond*: flee, leave, run
- *Accelerate*: bustle, dash, drive, hasten, hustle, push, press, race, rush, scramble, speed
- *Accommodate*: fit in, house, hold, put-up, take in
- *Achieve*: gain, get, grab
- *Acquisition*: benefit, bequest, find, gain, legacy, win
- *Administer*: control, direct, manage, run
- *Agreement*: accord, bargain, bond, deal, pact, treaty
- *Bankruptcy*: crash, collapse, failure
- *Beginning*: birth, Dawn, debut, onset, opening, start
- *Business*: company, fir, trader
- *Ceremony*: display, fete, pageant, parade, party, review, spectacle
- *Calculate*: assess, estimate, rate, value
- *Challenge*: contest, layer, defy, doubt, dispute, flout
- *Coalition*: alliance, band, group, league, syndicate
- *Complain*: accuse, growl, grumble, object, protest
- *Communicate*: pass on, reveal, tell
- *Confront*: face
- *Contradict*: deny, dispute, disown, dissent, reject, refute, slap
- *Damage*: harm, hit, hurt, ruin, spoil, wreck
- *Deflation*: cut, squeeze
- *Denomination*: name, religion, school
- *Designate*: appoint, name, select
- *Destruction*: damage, havoc, ruin, waste, wreck
- *Disagree*: argue, differ, fall out
- *Dissolve*: end
- *Discrimination*: bias, favouritism, injustice, leaning, prejudice
- *Employment*: job, work
- *Essential*: key, main, must, necessary, needed
- *Estimate*: conjecture, fixed price, guess, judge, value
- *Exaggerate*: amplify, blow up, enlarge, increase, magnify, overstate, swell
- *Explosion*: blast, shock, spasm
- *Expedite*: ease, hasten, held, hurry, press, rush, speed, urge

- *Fabricate*: falsehood, lie, tale, untruth
- *Fashionable*: in vogue, modish, stylish
- *Foundation*: basis, base, beginning, clarity
- *Govern*: command, control, direct, manage, rule, run
- *Grievance*: grouse, grudge, hardship, injury, injustice, wrong
- *Guarantee*: blend, pledge, secure, support, endorse, insecure
- *Harmonise*: accord, agree, conciliate, heal, pacify, patch, settle, smooth
- *Hazardous*: bold, perilous, risky, unsafe
- *Illegitimate*: illegal, illicit, unlawful, wrong
- *Illustrate*: explain, picture, show, reveal
- *Improve*: amend, better, bolster, ease, enhance, amend, remodel, refresh
- *Inaccurate*: false, untrue, wrong
- *Income*: cash, money, pay, salary, wages
- *Inauguration*: debut, opening, start
- *Inquire*: ask, examine, look into, question, search, sift
- *Intercept*: balk, hold up, impede, obstruct, stop
- *Interrogate*: examine, fathom, grill, probe, pump, question, quiz, vet
- *Jeopardize*: endanger, hazard, imperil, risk
- *Judgement*: the decision, decree, finding, result, ruling, verdict
- *Justify*: bear out, clear, confirm, defend, endorse, excuse, explain
- *Kidnap*: abduct, capture, seizure, snatch
- *Kingdom*: empire, land, realm, state
- *Legalize*: allow, enact, ordain, permit, warrant
- *Legacy*: bequest, gift, present
- *Locality*: area, district, region, zone
- *Magistrates*: court, bench, JPs, justice
- *Management*: board, company, directors, firm, owners
- *Manufacture*: make, produce
- *Massacre*: carnage, genocide, killing, murder, slaughter, destroy, slay
- *Maximum*: biggest, ceiling, highest, top, most
- *Meeting*: caucus, forum, talk(s)
- *Nationalization*: conversion, take-over
- *Nationalize*: acquire, grab, take over

- *Negotiate*: bargain, confer, discuss, haggle, meet, talk
- *Nomination*: place, seat, ticket, vote
- *Object to*: abuse, attack, censure, denounce, dispute, fight, knock, rap, rebuke slate
- *Objection*: attack, outcry, protest
- *Observe*: check, eye, inspect, note, spy, watch
- *Obstinate*: firm, hard, solid, stubborn, tough
- *Occupation*: job, role, tenure, work
- *Operate*: act, control, run, work
- *Operation*: action, act, deed, surgery, work
- *Opportunity*: chance
- *Opposition*: critics, enemies, foes, opponents, rebels, rivals
- *Pacify*: allay, calm, cool, heal, settle
- *Performance*: action, display, exploit, show
- *Give Permission*: agree, allow, approve, OK, pass, permit, say yes to
- *Postpone*: block, delay, hold up
- *Procedure*: action, conduct, habit, practise, process
- *Programme*: campaign, drive, effort, move, plan
- *Prohibit*: ban, bar, check, curb, kill, prevent, stop, veto, forbid
- *Promising*: bright, hopeful
- *Prosecute*: arraign, charge, cite, sue, summons
- *Pursue*: follow, hurry, search, track, seek, hunt
- *Pursuit*: chase, hunt, quest, search
- *Question*: ask, challenge, doubt, probe, query, quiz
- *Quotation*: price, quote, tender
- *Ratification*: approval, consent, signing
- *Reception*: party, welcome
- *Recession*: slump
- *Reduction*: cut, fall
- *Regulation*: code, rule
- *Renounce*: drop, forgo, give up, lay aside, quit, recant
- *Registration*: abdicate, departure
- *Resign*: give up, lie down, leave, quit
- *Revenue*: cash income, money, tax (es)

- *Sanction*: approve, OK, pass
- *Statement*: advice, news, notice, report, view
- *Supplication*: entreaty, plea, prayer, request
- *Terminate*: end, stop
- *Transaction*: affair, deal, process, trade
- *Transformation*: change, shake up
- *Treasure*: riches, spoils, wealth
- *Undermine*: belittle, burrow, damage, hurt, impair, sap, weaken
- *Undertaking*: deal, mission, plan, plot
- *Vacillate*: dodge, evade, hedge, wobble, wiggle
- *Vindication*: acquittal, clearance, defence
- *Vulnerable*: suspect, tender, weak
- *Warranty*: bond, pledge, promise
- *Withhold*: bar, ban, deny, keep back
- *Wreckage*: damage, debris, rubble, ruins, waste

9.14 FURTHER READINGS

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9.15 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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 5Ws and 1H approach and Subject-Verb-Object Approach

2. All lead writers follow the 5Ws (WHAT, WHEN, WHO, WHERE, WHY) and 1-H (HOW) approach.
3. For the reader's clarity, lead writers usually follow a subject-verb-object sentence structure that makes the idea of the lead straightforward. Consequently, using active rather than passive voice is the most favoured way of writing a lead sentence.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Depending upon the content structure, leads may be classified as Summary Lead, Descriptive Lead, Question Lead and Caption Lead. Leads can also be categorized based upon the subject or context of the content. Quotation Lead, Contrast Lead, Staccato Lead and You Lead.
2. A proactive question can be used to generate interest answer to which is found in one or more of the following paragraphs making the body of the story. The caption lead comes handy when the copy writer is armed with an unexpected piece of information that has to be conveyed in a hard-hitting manner.
3. Summary lead's objective is to convey main idea of the story to the reader. Descriptive type of lead is more descriptive and explanatory
4. Descriptive lead used to explain a person, or a scene or an event in detail in response to *where* and *who* questions.

Check Your Progress 3

1. A headline is defined as the heading of a news story or article. It is generally placed on the top of the story, printed in large type and gives the news succinctly in an attention-grabbing manner.
2. Headline is the title of a news story. It is placed on the top of every news story to serve as the heading for the content written below. Apart from providing the crux of the news content, it helps the reader decide whether the news story is of interest to him or not. It is written in bold and bigger type face than the body of news story.
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 4

1. Headlines can be classified into various categories based on their structure, context, presentation and positioning.
2. A comment headline is the one that interprets the news partly. A quotation headline is the one that uses quotes in order that its impact is not reduced or lost after it is paraphrased.
3. A question headline is the one that evokes curiosity, highlights speculative points or provokes the reader. A descriptive headline is the one which describes the gist of a news story.
4. Label type of headline does not have a verb. It is a label and is similar to a book title.