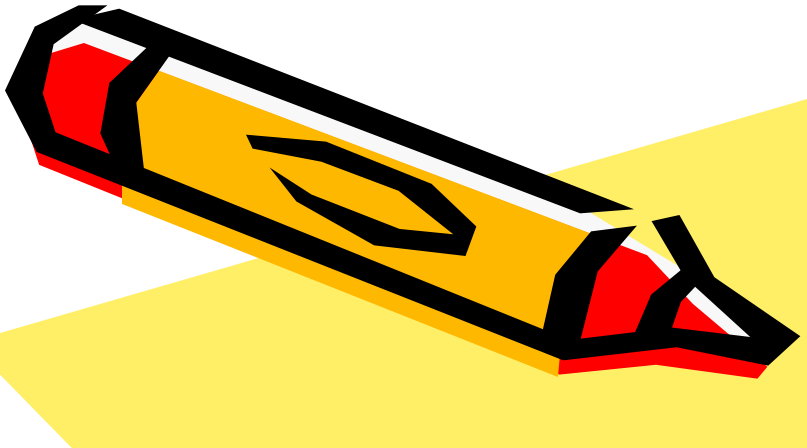
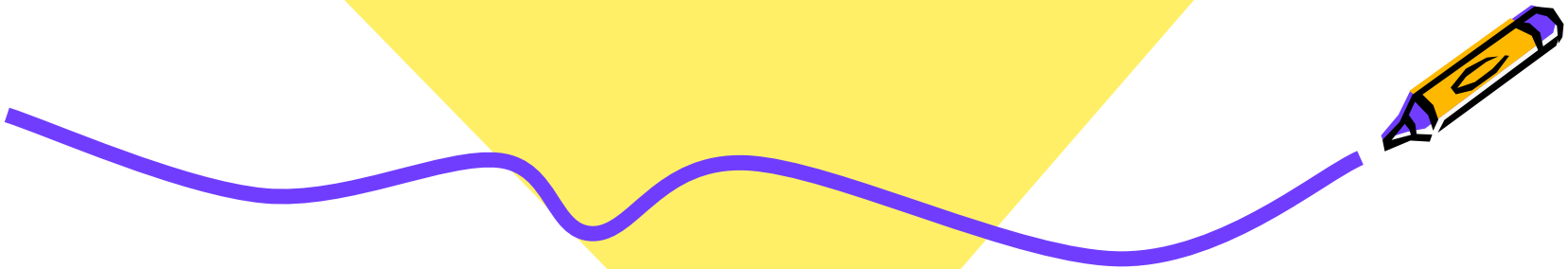


THE LANGUAGE OF HEADLINES

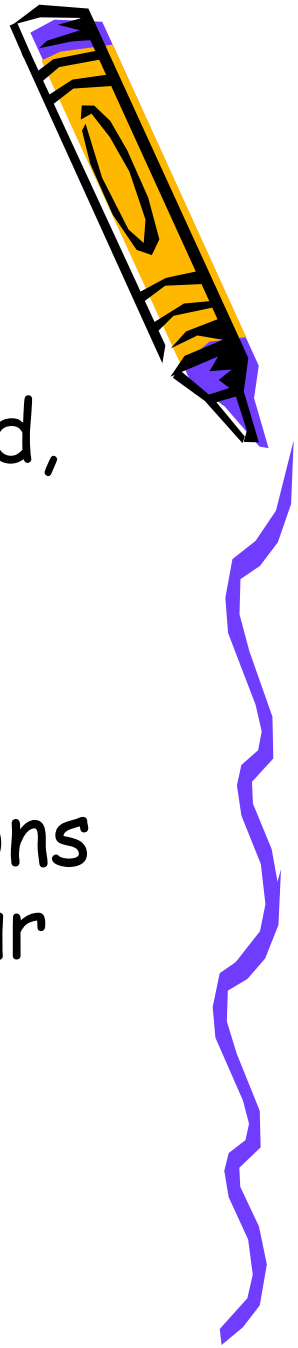
TYPES OF NEWSPAPERS



News

- News comes to us from several sources including word of mouth, newspapers, television and radio broadcasts and increasingly via the Internet.
- Each medium has its own style, but we can also identify a journalistic register, of which newspapers are the most significant users.

It is easy to tell by the size and shape of British newspaper what kinds of readers they are aimed at.



- What are the two main types called, and who reads them?
- What other differences are there between newspapers?
- Are there similarly clear distinctions between types of newspaper in your country?

Possible answers

- 1. broadsheets and tabloids.
- 2. There are differences according to the contents, the frequency of publication (daily, weekly, Sunday supplements),etc.
- 3. In Spain tabloids are more similar to magazines; the big national newspapers belong to a political party, whereas the British press is controlled by a rather small number of extremely large multinational companies.

Exercise

- Have a look at a couple of examples of each type of national newspaper and compare their headlines, style, layout, sections, etc.

- **TYPES OF PAPERS:**

BROADSHEETS AND TABLOIDS

- Each of the national papers can be characterized as belonging to one or two distinct categories:
  - The 'quality press'
  - The ' popular press'.

BROADSHEETS (quality press): characteristics

- **Broadsheets** are quality papers which include long information articles and editorial comments, comparatively few illustrations.
- Their main aim:
  - to provide readers with comprehensive coverage and analysis of the international and national news of the day.
  - They devote much space to politics and other 'serious' news.
  - They use a serious tone, formal and wide vocabulary and standard English.
- The best selling quality papers are "The Daily Telegraph", "The Times ", "The Guardian".

The Herald

SCOTLAND'S LEADING QUALITY DAILY NEWSPAPER

WORK IT OUT

HOW YOU CAN GET FIT IN THE OFFICE PAGE 13

ALONSO VICTORY CUTS HAMILTON'S CHAMPIONSHIP LEAD

MONDAY SPORT

BRIEFING

Warning on fire alarms in primary schools

Fluid dies on re-election

FOREIGN

Taliban with Kandahar control vow

FEATURES

STRING THEORY

Why he can laugh, towards control, to transform in much

PLUS

Made in the borders

BUSINESS

Income renewal merger talk

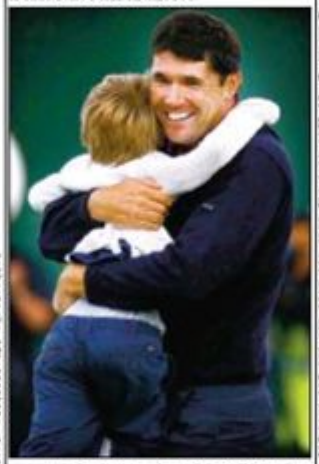
SPORT

Clifton chairman Englishman gone

Minorities twice as likely to be victims of crime

Police figures reveal inequalities

HARRINGTON TAKES CLARET JUG



Boy, aged 2, dies after being found in country estate burn

Holiday homes plan to tackle shortage of council housing

MORE

Homeless policies at PT

Leader comment PT8

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Jan Moir's Valentine dinner in Paris

Weekend

Short breaks to New York from £249

Travel Page 25

The Daily Telegraph

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING QUALITY DAILY

£10,500 fees if Oxford is to stop the rot

Private Diana video to be shown on TV

12 SECTIONS EVERY SATURDAY

Elton John

Goodbye to glam

News Review Page 21

Sugar and spice

Maggie Gyllenhaal conquers Hollywood

Magazine

Anne Robinson

A new shopping season begins

Comment Page 23

The Thelwell pony

Nasty, brutish and short

Weekend

The big freesia

The power of perfume

Gardening

Plus

Zoe Heller

Craig Brown

Ben Schott

£35m saves Raphael for nation

In Brief

Howard wants Blair debate

Kerry 'victim of smears'

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THE TIMES

Life on all fours

Exclusive The family of quadrupeds

Migrants in Britain – the official verdict

▶ They work harder, longer and earn more

▶ Concern over impact on crime, NHS and homes

Native workers sometimes prove unreliable . . . which makes a business hard to run

I couldn't escape age question, says Ming

Critics criticised

BAE chief to quit

No hormone Pill

Terry injury blow

FINANCIAL TIMES

Rice calls on Iran to attend Iraq conference

Poll showdown looms as French demand change

Japanese think-tank looks at state fund to manage foreign reserves

HARRY WINSTON

TABLOIDS(popular press): characteristics

- Tabloids are printed in half broadsheet size and sell to a much larger readership.
- They contain far less print than the broadsheets and far more pictures.
- They use larger headlines and write in a simpler style of English.
- They concentrate on 'human interest' stories, which offen means sex and scandal!

$1 LESS THAN US WEEKLY
WEEKLY
Life&Style
TONY & JESSICA
Suri's $350,000 Wardrobe!
SO PREGNANT! BUT ANGELINA PROUDLY WEARS A BIKINI
FRIENDS FEAR JESSICA GOT
DUMPED AGAIN!
PHOTO EXCLUSIVE YES, JEN'S IN LOVE!
WHAT WENT WRONG. As her sister weds, Jessica faces another failed relationship
STEAL THE STARS' LOOKS
EARRINGS $20
HANDBAG $46
T-SHIRT $13
SHOES $20

DAILY Mirror
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
JONNY
Hands off, it's OURS!
AMY DRUG ARREST
EXCLUSIVE!
ANT & DECEIT
Their shows con phone-in callers out of millions
10,000 Lotto tickets to be won

NEW YORK POST
25 CENTS
LATE CITY FINAL
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008 / Clouds giving way to sun. 51 / Weather: Page 28 ★★
www.nypost.com
25¢
SPITZER SEX SCANDAL
Gov. Spitzer's wife, Silda, looks as if she'd rather be anyplace else in the world yesterday while he grimly apologizes after being exposed as a client of a prostitution ring.
HO NO!
Gov in romp with hooker 'Kristen'
Howls for resignation
REPORTS, ANALYSIS: PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Headline language

- Headline language is elliptical and compressed. It is very important for the readers to study and to understand the headlines.
- Word choice often results in an exaggeration of the meaning;short and rhyming words are preferred.

- Many students have difficulty understanding newspaper headlines.

This is because newspaper headlines are often incomplete sentences

- (i.e. *Difficult Times Ahead*).

Here is a guide to the most common exceptions found in newspaper headlines.

Noun Phrases

- Headlines often contain a noun phrase with no verb. A noun phrase describes a noun (i.e. *around strange, exotic people*). Here are some examples of noun phrase headlines:
- *Under Pressure from Boss*
  Unexpected Visit
  Overwhelming Response of Voters

- It's useful to ask yourself questions such as: From what?, About what?, From whom?, To whom? etc. when reading these type of headlines. By asking yourself these questions, you can begin preparing yourself for the article. This practice helps the brain prepare itself by starting to think about vocabulary related to the subject. Here's an example:

- ***Unexpected Visit***
- The questions I can ask myself are: From whom? Why was the visit unexpected? Who was visited? etc. these questions will help focus my mind on vocabulary related to relationships, travelling, surprises, important reasons for visits, etc.

Noun Strings

- Another common headline form is a string of three, four or more nouns together (i.e. *Country Leader Question Time*). These can be difficult because the words don't appear related by verbs or adjectives. Here are some more examples:
  - **Widow Pension Pay Committee**
    Landscaping Company Disturbance Regulations
    Mustang Referral Customer Complaint

- In the case of noun strings, it's helpful to try to connect the ideas by reading backward. For example:
  - **Mustang Referral Customer Complaint**
- By reading backwards, I can guess that: There is a **complaint** made by a **customer** about a **referral** program for **Mustang** cars. Of course, you need to use your imagination for this!

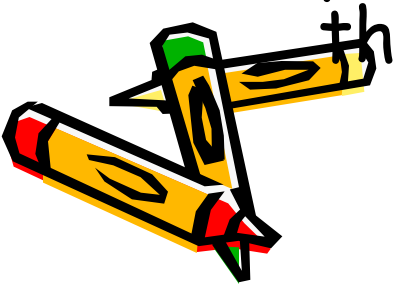
Various Verb Changes

- There are a number of verb changes made to headlines. The most common are:
- Simple tenses used instead of continuous or perfect forms. For example:
  - **Forgotten Brother Appears** = A forgotten brother has appeared (after a long period of time).
    Professors Protest Pay Cuts = Professors are protesting pay cuts (at the university).

- The infinitive form refers to the future. For example:
  - **Mayor to Open Shopping Mall** = The mayor is going to open a new shopping mall.
    -James Wood to Visit Portland = (Famous actor) James Wood is going to visit Portland soon.

- Auxiliary verbs are dropped in the passive form. For example:
  - **Man Killed in Accident** = A Man has been killed in an accident.
    Tommy the Dog Named Hero = Tommy the Dog has been named a hero (by the mayor).

- **Drop Articles**
- Perhaps you have noticed in the examples above that both definite and indefinite articles are also dropped in newspaper headlines (i.e. *Mayor to Choose Candidate*). Here are some more examples:
  - **President Declares Celebration** = The president has declared a celebration.
    Passerby Sees Woman Jump = A passerby has seen a woman jump (into the river).



THE ROLE OF HEADLINES

- Is mainly that of offering the chance to the reader to choose . For example, we can have headlines as:
  - "BRIT OZONE WHOLE SHOCK"
  - "WEB OF DECEIT ",
  - "ROAD DUEL MAN JAILED ",
  - "WE'RE UNITED IN HOPE " .
- Headlines usually stimulate the interest of the reader for the content of the article.

TERROR
TERROR
TERROR
TERROR
TERROR
Bloody terror
Terror strike
Terrorists strike U.S.
Terror strikes U.S.
TERROR HITS HOME
TERROR HITS HOME
TERROR
BEYOND BELIEF
Terror and disbelief
Terrorized
TERROR'S TOLL
ATTACKED
ATTACKED
AMERICA ATTACKED
America Under Attack
ATTACK ON AMERICA
U.S. UNDER ATTACK
U.S. ATTACKED
U.S. ATTACKED
U.S. attacked
U.S. ATTACKED
U.S. attacked
AMERICA'S DARKEST DAY
Darkest hour
DAY OF DEATH
A NEW DAY OF INFAMY
A Day Of Terror
Day of terror
TERROR, NOW ANGER
America's nightmare
BASTARDS!
OUTRAGE
'Unyielding anger'
'FIND THE COURAGE'
WHAT NOW?
AMERICA'S BLOODIEST DAY
ASSAULT ON AMERICA
'EVIL ACTS'
Act of evil
ACT OF WAR
'ACT OF WAR'
ACT OF WAR
War at home
FREEDOM UNDER SIEGE
DEVASTATION
Thousands feared dead in terrorist attacks on U.S.
How many dead?
ATTACKS SHATTER NATION
AMERICA SAVAGED, FOREVER CHANGED
NATION MOURNS
'None of us will ever forget'
"NONE OF US WILL EVER FORGET THIS DAY"
'MASS MURDER'
UNTHINKABLE
'OUR NATION SAW EVIL'
BUSH VOWS TO STRIKE BACK
AMERICA VOWS REVENGE AS TERROR CLAIMS THOUSANDS
Bush vows terrorist acts to be avenged
'AMERICA'S FREEDOM WILL BE DEFENDED'

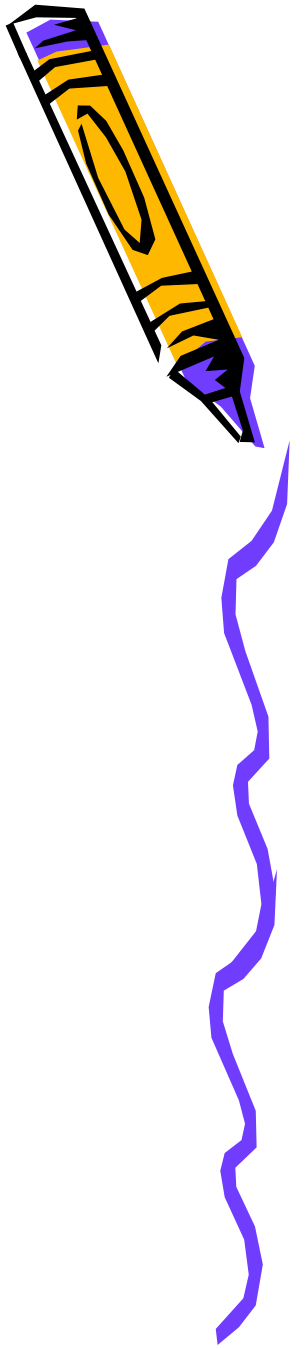
Newspaper Headlines Exercise1

- 1. Match these newspaper headlines into with the following categories (some headlines fit two categories):
- **Categories**
  - Noun Phrases
    Noun Strings
    Simple Tenses instead of Continuous or Perfect
    Auxiliary Verbs Dropped in Passive Form
    Articles Dropped
    Infinitive to Indicate Future

- Newspaper Headlines
  - Difficult Times Ahead
    Forgotten Brother Appears
    James Wood to Visit Portland
    Landscaping Company Disturbance Regulations
    Man Killed in Accident
    Mayor to Open Shopping Mall
    Mustang Referral Customer Complaint
    Overwhelming Response of Voters
    Passerby Sees Woman Jump
    President Declares Celebration
    Professors Protest Pay Cuts
    Tommy the Dog Named Hero
    Under Pressure from Boss
    Unexpected Visit
    Widow Pension Pay Committee

More headlines....

- Brown defends Russian expulsions
- Bush urges Mid-East peace talks
- Global broadband prices revealed
- Nuclear scare after Japan quake
- US Senate locked in Iraq battle
- Iraq oil city blasts kill dozens
- Detained Americans on Iran TV
- LA cardinal offers abuse apology
- Grapefruit link to breast cancer
- Golf: Ballesteros retires at 50
- Golf: Woods paired with Brits
- Football: Brazil win final
- Ethiopia life jail terms attacked
- Malawi urges national Aids test
- Potter casts spell at US cinemas
- Obama tops campaign fundraising
- UN confirms N Korea nuclear halt
- 'Threat' to EU-Burma embargo
- Germany gives up top job at EADS
- Ibiza marine park 'safe from oil'
- Libya to decide HIV medics' fate
- Israel to free inmates this week
- Police arrest Bangladeshi ex-PM
- Efforts 'to save' Pakistan deal
- TV firm takes rap for Queen error
- EU halts WTO's India alcohol case
- Brain target for stress disorder
- Endangered bird 'makes comeback'
- T-Mobile must open Truphone lines
- New X-Files movie 'coming soon'
- The Green Room



Remember!

- The style makes use of syntactical conventions such as:
  - **noun phrases**
  - **omission of articles**
  - **dropping of the auxiliary in the passive**
  - **use of infinitive to express future events or plans**
  - **simple tenses instead of progressive or perfect forms.**
  - **Present Simple to express both present and past events,words used as verbs and nouns.**

Newspaper headlines vocabulary

- a dominant characteristic is brevity.
- Short words save space, and so they are very common in headlines.

The following is a list of common headline vocabulary.

- **Act**: take action; do something
  POWER CRISIS: GOVERNMENT TO ACT
- **Aid**: (noun) military or financial help
  Aid (verb): to help
  MORE AID FOR POOR COUNTRIES
  UNIONS AID BANK STRIKERS

- **Alert:** alarm, warning
  TERROR ALERT IN THE CAPITAL

- **Allege:** make an accusation
  BLIND GIRL ALLEGES UNFAIR TREATMENT

- **Appear**: appear in court accused of a crime
  MP TO APPEAR ON DRUGS CHARGES

- **Axe** (verb): abolish, close down
  Axe (noun): abolition, closure
  POSTAL SERVICES AXED
  SMALL SCHOOLS FACE AXE

- **Back:** support
  OPPOSITION BACKS PM

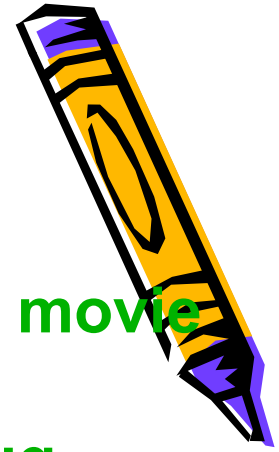
- **Ban:** forbid, refuse to allow something
  GOVERNMENT BANS SMOKING IN PUBLIC
- **Bar:** refuse
  HOTEL BARS FOOTBALL FANS
- **Bid:** attempt
  WOMAN MAKES SUICIDE BID
- **Blast:** explosion
  Blast: criticize violently
  BLAST AT AIRPORT
  OPPOSITION BLASTS PM
- **Blaze:** fire
  SIX DIE IN TEMPLE BLAZE
- **Blow:** bad news, unfortunate happening
  SMITH ILL: BLOW TO WORLD CUP HOPES

- **Bond:** political or business association
  INDIA CUTS TRADE BONDS WITH CHINA
- **Boom:** big increase; prosperous period
  ECONOMIC BOOM: URBAN RICH TO BENEFIT
- **Boost:** encourage
  GOVERNMENT PLANS TO BOOST EXPORTS
- **Call for:** demand/ appeal for
  TRADE UNIONS CALL FOR STRIKE
- **Campaign:** organized effort to achieve social or political result
  MP LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR TAX REFORMS
- **Claim (verb):** make a statement that something is true
  US SCIENTISTS CLAIM CANCER BREAKTHROUGH
- **Clash:** quarrel, fight
  STUDENTS CLASH WITH POLICE
- Etc.

Exercise 1

- Browse British or American online newspapers, choose one or two pieces of news and analyze their headline language.
- Write the headline in full.
- Explain the reasons behind your choice.

EXERCISE 2. MATCH THE HEADLINES TO THE TOPICS



- **Company shares rise again**
- **Box office success for new Johny Depp movie**
- **Lose weight and live longer**
- **Breakthrough in research for cancer drug**
- **Train strike causes chaos for commuters**
- **Snow alert for Scotland**
- **Election date set**
  - sport
  - health
  - news
  - politics
  - business
  - weather
  - science
  - entertainment

Homework: Use this worksheet to make notes

- Headline:
- Where does the story take place?
- When does it take place?
- Who is involved?
- What happened/ is going to happen? (list the main facts in order)
- Key vocabulary

Thanks to

- http://www.perfectyourenglish.com/writing/newspaper-headlines-vocabulary.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspaper
- http://esl.about.com/od/intermediatereading/a/newsheadlines.htm
  - Adapted for advanced levels.