

Programme:- M.A (JMC)
Subject. Editing of

Print Media

Topic:- HEADLINES, SUB-
HEADLINES AND LEADS

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Programme Objective:- It demonstrates basics of HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS.

Programme Outcome:- Through this topic the students know about the basics of HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS.

Course Objective:- This paper has been introduced for the basic concept of the HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS. The students have to know about basics of the HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS.

Course Outcome:- The students can apply their knowledge in HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS sectors.

Learning Outcome :- The students get immense knowledge about fundamentals of HEADLINES, SUB-HEADLINES AND LEADS.

Functions of Headline

- A headline is the window to the accompanying story. It attracts the attention of the readers, holds their interest, and tells them about the story.
- A headline should:
 - *Attract the reader's attention,*
 - *Summarize the story,*
 - *Depict the mood of the story,*
 - *Help set the tone of the newspapers, and*
 - *Provide adequate typographic relief.*

Approaches to Headline

1. Good headlines attract reader's attention by focusing how the reader's life can be affected. "*Income tax rate to remain unchanged*", "*Government announces extra DA*", etc. are examples of this approach.
2. Another approach is to highlight the magnitude of an event as in this lead:
"*Earthquake in Nicaragua kills 15,000*".
Sometimes headlines are clever and unusual like this one: "*Thief caught eating*".
3. Headlines help summarize the story: "*India Pakistan sign treaty*", "*US declares war on mafia*", "*CBI initiates fresh probe*".

4. While such headlines are not very original and creative, they serve the basic purpose of telling the reader what the story is all about.
5. Sometimes headlines set the mood of stories: "*The easy way to change your car's oil*", or go "*Bald and Beautiful*", or "*It is a whole nude ball game*".
6. Headlines can also set the tone of a newspaper. A newspaper with such headlines as "*Police hunt for jilted lover*", "*Super model caught in a hotel*", can only be of sensational nature.
7. Different stories require different approaches. Good sub editors develop the ability to find out the best approach.

Headline styles

Most headlines are set in a single line or *deck*. But increasingly headlines are being set in two and even three decks.

- The most used headlines styles are the hanging indention, the inverted pyramid, and the pyramid.
- Sometimes the headline is longer than the story. Some tabloid newspapers also use more than ten decks for the headlines.

*Hanging Indention
(Right aligned)*

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXX

*Hanging Indention
(Left aligned)*

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXX

*Inverted
Pyramid*

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXX

Pyramid

XXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXX

The different types of headlines are

- ***Kicker*** headline is a short line of display type, usually in half or less point size than the headline and placed above the main part of the headline. Some newspapers call the kicker as the ***eyebrow*** or the ***tagline***.
- ***Stet*** headline is a standing headline which is used continuously issue after issue. "*Today in history*" is an example of a stet headline.

- ***Reverse plate*** headline is set in reverse i.e. the letters are printed in white on a black background.
- ***Reverse kicker*** is a line set in larger type sizes and placed above the main headline. It is also called a ***hammer*** or ***barker***.
- ***Banner*** headlines spread across all the columns of a front page. These usually shout the news about and are used while covering very, important stories.

WRITING THE HEADLINE

- Writing headline involves two steps:
 - Selecting which details to be used, and
 - Phrasing them properly within the space available.
- Good headlines, like good sentences, have a subject and predicate (verb), and a direct object. For example: "Flood hits Assam".

Suggestions about headline writing

- *Draw your headline from information at the top of the story.*
- *If the story has a punch ending do not give it away in the headline.*
- *Build your headline around key words*
- *Build the headlines on words used in the story*
- *Emphasize the positive unless the story demands the negative.*

- *Use active verbs. Maintain neutrality.*
- *Follow the rules of grammar.*
- *Try to arouse the reader's interest.*
- *Make the headline easy to read.*
- *Do not use common names in headlines.*
- *Do not use unnecessary words.*
- *Do not use double quotation marks in headlines.*

- *Abbreviate only when necessary.*
- *Verify the accuracy of the headline.*
- *See there is no double meaning.*
- *Use short and simple words.*
- *Make the headline specific.*
- *Make the headline complete in itself.*
- *Never start a headline with a verb.*

- *Do not write headlines after reading the story only once.*
- *Do not write question headlines for news stories.*
- *Do not mislead.*
- *Do not repeat words.*
- *Do not use full stops in headlines.*
- *Use present tense as much as possible.*
- *Do not use "is" and "are" in headlines.*

One final suggestion given to new comers –

- Sub editing is to enjoy the process of headline writing.
- It is a creative activity.
- *Somerset Maugham* once said, "you cannot write well unless you write much".
- Similarly good headline writing comes after long practice.
- *Avoid overstating, commanding, editorializing, sensationalizing, stating the obvious and boring the readers.*

NEWS STORY SUB-HEADLINES

- Sub headline are supplementary to headlines.
- Sub headlines are used only when the headline cannot tell the required part of the news.
- Sub headlines play a supporting or supplementary role to the headline.
- Some news stories are very detailed in nature. These stories could be multi-faceted or complicated in nature. Such stories have many important pieces of information that need to be given right at the beginning. These kinds of news stories use sub headlines in addition to headlines.

WRITING NEWS STORY LEADS

- Writing the lead or the introduction is the most challenging job of a news writer. Leads are divided into two kinds: *direct lead* and *delayed lead*.
- Hard news stories take a direct lead while soft news and features take a delayed lead.
- Direct lead answers *Who, What, When, Where, Why and How (the five W's and an H)* in the first two paragraphs, whereas delayed lead delays it to raise the curiosity of the reader.
- Direct lead is written within a word limit of 35 words, whereas Delayed Lead has no such limit.

Writing news story leads

- For example -

– *Lead* -

Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in Prime Minister at 5.30 pm. in Rashtrapati Bhawan today. He becomes the 13th Prime Minister since Independence.

- The various elements here are:
- Who: Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- What: was sworn in as the 13th Prime Minister
- When: at 5.30 today
- Where: in Rashtrapati Bhawan
- Why: (implied)
- How: (not given)
- Focus: Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Direct Lead/Single-element

Writing news story leads

- Example: 2

Congress President Sonia Gandhi has promised the people that her party would work for communal harmony and better relations with the country's neighbours, if her party is elected to power. She was addressing an election rally in New Delhi's Boat Club lawns today.

- Focus: Sonia Gandhi,
- Direct Lead
- Two-element story:
 - i) Promises communal harmony
 - ii) Promises better neighbourly relations

Writing news story lead

- Example: 3

Finance Minister Yeshwant Sinha sprang a surprise by making three novel proposals in the Union Budget presented to Parliament on Friday. Business houses generating 500 jobs a year will be granted a 50% tax rebate and business houses adopting 10 backward villages will be totally exempted from taxes.

- *According to new measures to be taken up soon, business houses will be allowed to purchase 50% of shares in metro rails for rapid expansion of infrastructure.*
- Focus: Budget (an event larger than the finance minister).
- Direct Lead / A three-element story –
 - Union Budget
 - Three Noval proposals in the union budget
 - Shares in Metro Rail

Writing news story lead

- ***Example -3 – Delayed Lead***

He looked at the watch. It's 9 am. It was the most hectic time of the day in his career spanning 30 years. He believed in punctuality and fixed the habitual latecomers. He believed in intelligent hard work and fired sloppy managers. He believed in the power of imagination and sidetracked those without. He admired good workmanship and amply rewarded those dedicated team members who produced wonders for the company. That was his story till yesterday.

Qualities of Lead

- The lead or intro is the window to a story. It is the most important element of a story. Because the quality of the lead determines whether the reader would read further or skip the story. The lead should be short. So that it arouses and sustains interest.
- One good example of a short lead is "*Are nudes prudes*". The Bible has perhaps the best ever written introduction: "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*". One classic lead used during World War-II was, "*Today the Japanese fleet submitted itself to the destinies of war - and lost*". When hundreds of students died in an explosion in a school in Texas, one newspaper gave this lead - "*They are burying a generation today*".
- The intro or lead mostly becomes long as the reporter tries to pack everything into it.
- Sub editor finds out what details can be left out while the lead still gave enough information.

- Leads should not mislead.
- A good lead is brief, informative, summarize and straightforward.
- It sets the mood, the pace and the flavour of the story.
- Sub editors often have to deal with leads that contain excessive identification.
- Example –
- Problem is faced when a lead has too much statistics.

"At seven pm yesterday, 70 persons fled a three story building at 17, Nariman Point, west of Ville Parle, when a carelessly discarded cigarette caused a short-circuit and resulted a huge fire accompanied with dense smoke".

This could be revised as:

"Seventy people escaped unhurt from a three story building in Nariman Point that caught fire last evening. The fire was caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette".

- Misleading leads include ones with *over attribution* or *under attribution*. Such attribution is unnecessary and confusing.
"Notorious gangster Harbhajan Singh, suspected to be involved in many cases of abduction, contact killing and ransom, was arrested last week after a six hour long shootout, according to Delhi Police chief Sasank Mathur and Deputy chief Prahlad Varma".
- On the other hand a some lead does not provide any attribution at all. Reporters can get away with these kinds of leads. But the sub editor has to
- find out such leads and refine and polish them.
"All children under the age of five should be vaccinated"

Types of Lead

- *Name Lead*: When the person(s) mentioned in the news is/are important.: PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee said
- *Short Lead*: Conveys the most important part of the news in three/four words-'Nehru is dead'.
- *Negative Lead*: *No possibility exists of any survivors in the train accident that occurred yesterday*
- *Suspended Interest Lead*: When there is no particular focus or a kind of an interesting twist this kind of lead is used. It is also known as a "Featurised lead".
- *Question Lead*: The first sentence raise important questions, e.g., Who is responsible for the mess o Delhi roads?
- *Direct Quotation Lead*: when the first paragraph begins with a quotation from a speech or statement made by a VIP.
- *Contrast Lead*: A lead, which compares the two different situations to bring out the focus.
For example: *What marks the easy-going attitude of the government servants is hard to comprehend when one looks at pending case in courts.*
- Other leads such as *descriptive lead, parody lead, chronological lead, staccato lead (stop and start lead), etc.*

BODY OF NEWS STORY

- The technique and style of writing a news item is generally called the "inverted pyramid".
- Inverted pyramid structure of news means - the news will begin with the most important information. This is known as the "lead". Lead is also called "intro" or introduction as it introduces the news story.
- Subsequent parts (body) would be developed in logical order to support the lead. The second most important fact comes next, then the third, and fourth and so on.
- Normally, the story is written in short paragraphs.
- Each sentences of not more than two-dozen words.
- Each paragraph of not more than two or three sentences.
- Though the inverted pyramid structure is applicable to hard news, but is may not applicable to soft news, featurised news and sometimes even for sports news.

The other styles of news story writing are:

- o *Chronological style*
 - o *Reverse Chronological style*
 - o *Suspended-Animation style*
- Chronological style of news writing is adopted when the chronology or order of events is more important.
- Reverse-chronological style of news writing is adopted when in the beginning we want to present what happened finally at the end and then go back to the beginning of the event.
- The suspended-animation style of news writing is adopted when maintaining the curiosity of the readers is more important.

EDITING ARTICLES

- Article and feature appeals to the emotions.
- It covers all kinds of topics and provides the information in an interesting and easy-to-read manner.
- A feature tries to entertain while informing.
- Editorials provide the newspaper's point of view.
- Articles provide the point of view of individual writers.
- Articles, like editorials, analyze and interpret. It provides arguments and counter-arguments. An article goes to the root cause of an event or happening and provides background information. Then it describes the present situation and finally peeps into the future also.
- An article may start with a peep into the future and then cover the past and present.
- It may start with the present situation, go to the past and then look into the future.
- Also it is not necessary that an article should deal with the past or predict the future.

- Articles have the following purposes:
 - To analyze the present.
 - To interpret a trend.
 - To provide some important information.
 - To predict the future.
 - To present a point of view.

- Article writers analyze and interpret things and events.
- They try to rationalize. There is no place for humour and such emotions in articles.
- Articles are sober, serious - both content and treatment wise.
- The basics of editing that apply to article include:
Credibility, Consistency, conciseness, completeness, and continuity.
- Article editors see to it that all the relevant information is there to make the article concrete and complete.
- An article must be believable also. Article editors try to incorporate all relevant facts, source credibility, authentic research; original quotes are few things that make an article believable.
- Article editors try to see that an article has a definite beginning (lead or introduction), a body, and an end (conclusion).

- The basic format used for articles are:
 - o Chronological *format*, (past-present-future),
 - o *Reverse chronological format* (future-present-past),
 - o *Flashback format*.
- Article editors see to it that the article has the relevant *details, statistics, claims, and counter-claims* in the body to present, project and promote their point of views.
- The body of an article is where claims are supported and defended while opposing viewpoints are attacked.

EDITING FEATURES

- Feature can cover any aspect of an event and in a manner as to make it interesting.
- Feature appeals to the emotions of the readers.
- The feature has a subjective treatment and is rarely objective.
- All feature stories are not directed at the same type of readers and not all features are intended to achieve the same purpose.
- Different features are written to appeal to different people in different situations.
- Most features can be classified into one of the following groups:
 - o *The strange features*
 - o *The personality features*
 - o *Opinion features*
 - o *Seasonal features*
 - o *The supplement features*
 - o *Arts features*
 - o *How-to-do-it features*

- Many feature stories are *climactic*. They build toward a convincing ending. And this ending often is the most important part of the entire feature.
- Tone of the feature is personal.
- Probing for the hidden angle helps the goal is to enable the reader to identify with the things or events the feature is about.
- Feature editors select words that lend connotative strength to the feature whenever possible. Such words are called "*picture words*".
- For example, words like 'vehicle', 'car', 'four-wheeler', etc. create hazy pictures in our minds. But words like 'a battered Ambassador' create a definite and crystal clear picture in the minds of the readers.

- **SUMMARY:**

- News is anything that is new. News is a report of an event that has just taken place. News is a detailed account that provides information or description. The event is usually recent, fresh or not known earlier.
- Legendary American editor, Joseph Pulitzer, once said that news should be: *Original, Distinctive, Romantic, Thrilling, Unique, Curious, Quaint, Humorous, Odd, and Apt-to-be talked about.*
- The major characteristics of news are: Timelines, Proximity, Prominence, Consequence, Human interest, Unusual events like mysteries, Conflict, Tragedies, etc.
- News writing is done with a view to providing information that is correct, objective, fair, balanced, accurate, precise, and to the point.
- It is a skilled craft.
- It can be acquired by dint of hard work, dedication, understanding, sustained and prolonged practice over a period of time. It also involves asking relevant questions; checking, counter-checking, crosschecking, and double-checking information.
- It requires the capability of fairly and impartially analyzing and interpreting information so collected.

- Generally a news story answers the following six questions: **WHO** is or are involved? **WHEN** did the event take place? **WHERE** did the event take place? **WHY** did it take place? **WHAT** did actually take place? And **HOW** did it take place? These questions are known, as the five **W**'s and one **H**.
- The structure of writing a news story is the "inverted pyramid structure".
- The inverted pyramid structure of news means that the news will begin with the most important information.
- The structure is as follows: First paragraph: Most important point; Second Para: The second important point; Third Para: The next important point; Fourth Para: The next important point; and so on..

Lead could be of several types:

- *Name Lead*: When the person(s) mentioned in the news is/are important;
- *Question Lead*: The first sentence raises important questions, e.g. who is responsible for the mess on Delhi roads?
- *Negative Lead*: No possibility exists of any survivors in the train accident that occurred yesterday;
- *Suspended Interest Lead*: When there is no particular focus in the story yet it deserved to be told;
- *Direct Quotation Lead*: when the first paragraph begins with a quotation from a speech or statement made by a VIP;
- *Contrast Lead*: A lead, which compares the two different situations to bring out the focus. For example: What marks the easy-going attitude of the government servants is hard to comprehend when one looks at pending case in courts.
- Other leads are *descriptive lead, parody lead, chronological lead, staccato lead (stop and start lead)*, etc.