

HEADLINE DOS AND DON'TS



The headline's purpose is to capture the reader's attention and draw it into the story. It's important and if not done well, good writing can go unnoticed. Listed here are some dos and don'ts for good headline writing.

DO

- Read the story carefully.
- Think of and write down eye-catching words.
- Use action packed verbs. Replace the verb "to be" (is, are, was, were) with action verbs in the present tense.

Instead of: **Varsity Was District Winner**

Write: **Every Second Counts**

- Provide intrigue. Try the unexpected to lure your reader.

Instead of: **Key Club Sells Candy**

Write: **How Sweet It Is**

- Although you can't avoid the downside of high school, look for the "silver lining." Remember no one wants to be reminded of a losing season.

Instead of: **Basketball Team Loses**

Write: **One Out of Ten Ain't Bad**

- Be rhythmic in your word choice. Lyrical combinations are more interesting to read.
- Use single quotation marks in the headline.

Write: **All Soaps Aren't 'Scum'**

- Use a comma in place of the word "and."

Write: **Smith, Jones Tie for First**

- Write in present tense.
- Use a narrative style (subject/verb/direct object)

Write: **Cafeteria Tosses in Salad Bar**

- Use a headline on every spread.
- Eliminate all unnecessary words

DON'T

- Don't pull an obscure fact from the bottom of the story to play-up in the headline.
- Don't use labels, except for division pages, title pages and class pages.

Instead of: **Girls' Volleyball**

Write: **A Natural High**

- Don't use a period in the headline. Instead, use a semi-colon to separate thoughts.
- Don't hyphenate a headline or spread it across the gutter.
- Don't write "and" "the" or "a" in a headline. These words are understood.

Instead of: **The Prom and Senior Breakfast Are to be Sponsored by Parents**

Write: **Parents Rock Around the Clock**

- Don't abbreviate unless absolutely necessary and understood.
- Don't split verb phrases;

Band Gets

Ready to

Go

- Don't split a preposition and its object

Jazz Ensemble in

Hot Pursuit of

Cool Rhythms

- Don't separate an adjective and the word it modifies.

Team Grinds to Screeching

Halt Without Coach

