

# 1.10 WRITE A HEADLINE

**DIRECTIONS:** Below is a “bright” story, modified from a story originally distributed on the UPI wire service. Write a headline to fit the specs below. Then answer the following questions and be prepared to discuss your answers in a small group. For this exercise, use no more than 12 characters per column. So, in a 2-column headline, each line can have no more than 24 characters. And no more than 36 characters per line in a 3-column headline.

MORRISSON, ILL. (UPI)—Something afoul is afoot in this community, where pink flamingo lawn ornaments have become the focus of vigilante vandals.

The caper reared its ugly head last week when Bob Audet discovered his six flamingos missing from his yard and a pink ransom note demanding \$1 million for their return left in his mailbox.

Audet responded by placing \$1 million in play money in an envelope in the

mailbox. A few days later, four of the kidnapped birds were returned wearing blindfolds.

A few blocks away and a few days later, Tammy Patton awoke to find her four flamingo lawn ornaments hanging by the neck from a tree.

Patton is offering a \$1 reward for the perpetrator’s capture and her son, Police Chief Steve Cohen, said he is hopeful the bounty will flush out a suspect.

1 x 24 x 3

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2 x 30 x 2

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3 x 36 x 1

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Look on the computers to which you have access. What would be an appropriate font for headlines? Why?

Look back at the headlines you wrote. Underline the VERB in each one.

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the checklist below, evaluate your headlines. In the time you have available, rewrite your headlines to make them more informative and entertaining.

The headline

- Entices the readers into the text.
- Summarizes the story.
- Is conversational, avoiding “headlinease” or jargon.
- Written in present tense.
- Written in active, not passive, voice.
- Written to avoid bad splits, keeping adjectives and the words they modify on the same line and compound verbs on the same line, for example.