

Headlines

Communications & Media

The part everyone reads, and often the only part.

Rules

- Active verb, present tense
- Carry the news, not the topic
- Match the story exactly
- Front-load the keyword
- Attribute contested claims

Traps

- Question headlines that dodge the answer
- Stating an allegation as a fact
- Curiosity gaps with no payoff
- Puns that obscure the news
- Numbers stripped of their base

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

For most readers the headline is the story, so it has to be accurate standing alone.

A headline that overstates the story is a correction waiting to happen, and it is the version that travels furthest.