Making the most of newspaper headlines

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I like to think that I’m a sort of poet for our times. My shout. Know what I mean?
I’ve got a special talent and I show it in punchy haikus featuring the Queen.

What am I?
Of course, these days, there’s not the sense of panic you got a few years back. What with the box et cet. I wish I’d been around when the Titanic sank. To headline that, mate, would’ve been the tops.
App built to foil Russian spies soars after WhatsApp trouble

Vince Cable accused of plot to oust Nick Clegg

Special vocabulary

Why do newspapers use special vocabulary for headlines? Choose the best answer

- To impress the readers
- To save space
- To be different from other types of reading
- To help sell more newspapers
- Because journalists are uneducated
**Woman keeps 'alien' in fridge for two years after it crash-lands outside her home**

**Man beat wife in jealous rage over male stripper at house party**

**Surfer hit shark to stay alive**

**14 killed as plane hits graveyard**

**NEW CANCER DRUG DEVELOPED**

**Scotland's ugliest woman honoured**

**Clever children 'likelier to take drugs'**

**Soldier held over lover’s stab murder**

**A fuel crisis made in Downing Street**
What is usually missing?
- articles
- auxiliaries
- the verb to be
- prepositions and pronouns
- miscellaneous
- punctuation

Noun strings/ piles
Delhi to examine 'weak regulation' of clinical trials using infinitive for future
Man carries dazed deer to safety

Duchess of Cornwall becomes proud owner of Zulu headdress

Using present simple for past

The tense system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense used in the headline</th>
<th>Time indicated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present (e.g. dies)</td>
<td>Past (=has died, died)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past participle (e.g. found)</td>
<td>Past [passive] (= has been found) [or occasionally Present]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive (e.g. to launch)</td>
<td>Future (=is going to launch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tense (no verb)</td>
<td>General [Present or sometimes Past]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Headlinese
Take a random selection of English tabloids and flip through them: you will soon notice that almost every other headline involves some kind of play on words – a pun, a double meaning, a deliberate jokey misspelling, a literary or historical reference, a clever neologism, an ironic put-down, a cunning rhyme or amusing alliteration, and so on. Yes, many of the puns are dreadful; much of the humour is laboured, vulgar or childish; the sexual innuendo is overdone; and the relentlessness of the wordplay can become wearing after a while. You may find yourself longing for a headline that simply gives you the gist of the story, without trying to be funny or clever. But the sheer ingenuity and linguistic playfulness must be admired, and all this compulsive punning, rhyming and joking is uniquely and gloriously English.

Teenage girls are so bad for my lad

Using rhyming words

Using names of famous people
A woman was driving on a road in Limerick when ab. 20,000 litres of slurry from a hilltop farm’s slurry pit cascaded down the hill and across the road at great speed. The wave hit her Ford Fiesta and swept it into a nearby field, but thankfully she escaped unhurt. The road was closed for most of the day.
Children's boss axed after death

The director of a children's services department which admitted failings in the protection of a murdered toddler has been sacked.

Mr Talbot was in charge of Staffordshire social services department while the investigation into the protection of murdered toddler Louis Wilkinson was carried out.

Salmond children's director fired after toddler death

Edinburgh council's director of children's services, Christine Mahoney, has been dismissed for her handling of the investigation into the death of murdered toddler Louis Wilkinson.

Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

Students Cook & Serve Grandparents

On Thursday, September 19, Granville School hosted its annual Grandparents' Day.

All students were asked to submit a recipe for a school-wide parade breakfast. Upper grade students served as breakfast chefs, as well as taking responsibility for setting tables and keeping up service.

Princess Diana dresses to be auctioned

Ten dresses, including gowns designed by Catherine Walker, Bruce Oldfield and Zandra Rhodes, to go under the hammer

More time granted to murder police

A driver who admitted causing the death of a 15-year-old girl by careless driving has been given an initial interview by the police.

Moped death driver denies cover up
Whale meat again, my love
Learn to spell rite, dad
Jokey misspelling

Fatboy Slim, Russell Brand Share 'Bromance' at Olympic Ceremony
We were mugged by hoodies, Mr Cameron ... so PLEASE don’t ask us to hug them
Sexting has become normal behaviour for young adults who date
Independent Scotland 'could be bitcoin testbed'
Government blocks chuggers ban

New words
Guess the missing word

- London named the ___capital of the world
- Swans do not like ___ at all
- Kazakhstan: '____' statue removed after ridicule
- How _____became a global phenomenon
- Goodbye celebrity autograph, hello ____
- My David Cameron ____ doesn't make me a hypocrite
- Boy, 14, takes cheeky ____with the Queen during Belfast tour

**selfie**
A monument in Kazakhstan has been hastily removed after locals likened the figures on it to hobbits taking a "selfie", reports say.

Kazakhstan: 'Selfie' statue removed after ridicule

A BELFAST teenager took a selfie with the Queen yesterday, while she was visiting Northern Ireland.

Teen takes selfie with Queen!
Hodgson says England players can bring WAGs to Brazil after giving green light for partners to attend Miami training camp.

Along for the ride: Coleen Rooney (right), wife of Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney (left), could travel with England to the World Cup in Brazil this summer.

Why would John Humphrys name the last decade nasties rather than noughties?
The unimaginable horror of the 9/11 attacks began the 'Nasties' decade

56 people lost their lives in the July 7th 2005 terrorist attacks in London

The financial crisis was one of the most talked about stories of the decade

The MPs expenses scandal was another of the decade's most publicised stories
The issue of global warming was highlighted earlier in 2009 by a composite photograph showing a polar bear on a melting ice cap in front of the Houses of Parliament.

Finish the headlines

- Boy falls off the edge of a building but is saved by his ...
- Boy blows up a balloon with ...
- English woman wakes up with ...
- Seagull drops budgie on ...
• A six-year-old boy in China slipped between the security bars on his apartment windows but was saved from falling eight storeys to ground below, as his head couldn’t fit through the window bars, and he was left dangling from his ears.

• Andrew Dahl, from the USA, has set a new Guinness World Record for blowing up the most balloons in three minutes... with his nose!

• A woman from Cheltenham went to sleep with a migraine and woke up with a French accent. Kay Russell, a 49 year old grandma, went to sleep suffering with a migraine and woke up with a different accent. It is thought that she had developed foreign accent syndrome.

• A woman spoke of her shock at being hit on the head - by a plummeting budgie. Even weirder, it had been dropped by a passing seagull.
Ideas for using headlines

• Newspaper search
  ◦ Working in pairs or groups students could search through newspapers to find examples of headline features.

• Comparing headlines
  ◦ Students could compare headlines in different newspapers and analyse their style. Interesting contrasts can be found by comparing tabloids and quality papers.

• Finding synonyms in the text
  ◦ Students search for words in the text that mean the same as words in the headline.

• Predicting the story from the headline

Putting the headlines together

• Split some headlines in half. Students should match them up and guess the story.

Rewriting headlines as full sentences

Writing headlines using the first sentences of the news article

Matching headlines with stories

Headline poems
  ◦ Cut out words from headlines (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and give each student a pile of words. Student write a poem using the given words.
References and further reading

- Headline Posters
  http://www.firstnews.co.uk/forschools/headline-posters
- Paperboy. UK Newspaper Front Pages - http://www.thepaperboy.com/uk/front-pages.cfm
- Sanderson, P. (2010). Using Newspapers in the Classroom. CUP.

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