How Is News Presented?

Unlike an essay or a composition which requires an introduction at the beginning, a body of many paragraphs in the middle and a conclusion at the end, news comprises such components as the headline, the lead and the body respectively. More significantly, all the news detail is combined together, not in chronological order, but in an inverted pyramid in which the news is stacked in paragraphs in order of descending importance.

Why Is News Developed in an Inverted Pyramid?

In an inverted pyramid, the most important information is in the first or the first and second paragraphs which bear the 5 Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why (and sometimes How) and which constitutes the lead, the gist or the main idea of the entire news story. The rest of the body paragraphs contain less important information. The concept of having the most important information in the first or the second paragraph, known as the lead paragraph, originated in America during the Civil War when newspaper correspondents sent their news by telegraph or wire. Because they were afraid of malfunction of the telegraph system, or the enemy would

cut the wires, they fed the most important information in the first few sentences. The inverted pyramid form has been adopted by most newspapermen because it has more advantages both for the reader and editor. For one thing, it gives readers the convenience of grasping the news of the day by simply skimming the lead paragraphs.3

Also, it saves their time in continuing reading the story since the lead paragraph contains all the main idea. As for the editors, they may trim the news story from the bottom up if there is not enough space available or they judge that the story is not worth the reader’s attention.

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2 Itule, p.58.
3 Itule, p. 58.
Illustration 1: The Inverted Pyramid

The most important information

More important information

Important information

Less important information

Not very important information

The least important information
Headlines

The summary of a news story appears in the initial part of a news story and is called the *headline* which normally should not exceed 8-10 words and always have a subject plus a predicate or phrase such as an infinitive phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase or a prepositional phrase as follows:
Subject + Predicate

For example: Ramkhamhaeng opens Faculty of Engineering
Famed French violinist dies
EC Union may leave some out
45-kilos heroin seized in single haul this year

Subject + Infinitive phrase

For example: Seoul to give aid to Moscow
Laotian students to be accepted to study at MDA

Subject + Adjective phrase

For example: VN leader ready to visit Thailand soon
Chuan suitable for premier
Floods likely to hit Bangkok
Bush popular despite slowdown

Subject + Prepositional phrase

For example: Double standards in Buri Ram
Government in bid to stop corruption
Principles of Headlines

Headlines must be written in correlation with the following principles:

1. Always in the form of a sentence, not a clause, phrase or group of words.
2. With a subject.
3. With a main verb, either one word or two-word verb or phrasal verb, often using the present simple tense.
4. With 8-10 words approximately.
5. With simple words or sometimes eye-catching words.
6. With abbreviations for proper names if necessary, for example, UN (United Nations), ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), etc.
7. Without any articles preceding a countable noun.
8. Without a full stop or period at the end of a sentence.

Examples of Headlines

Following are the examples of headlines drawn from *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* of which the dates are not given here.

**The headlines with a subject and a main verb in the form of simple present tense:**

- PM urges help for rural poor (6 words)
- Traffic issue rocks coalition talks (5 words)
- **ASEAN plans** joint tight against pollution (6 words)
- New trademark bill affects computer industry (6 words)
Teenager launches AIDS assaults (4 words)
Princess Mother undergoes surgery (4 words)
Vietnam Airlines expands network, plans to buy jets (8 words)
Chuan rejects polls showing party’s rating on the slide (9 words)
Credit card giants team up on security for internet shopping (10 words)
Unruly Deputies Rebuff Gorbachev’s Plan, but He Offers New Draft (10 words, from Herald Tribune, September 5, 1991)

The headlines with a subject and main verb reduced in a participle phrase:

Ghandi Killed by Hindu Fanatic (5 words)
(Ghandi was killed by a Hindu fanatic.)
32 killed in Liberia factional fighting (6 words)
(32 people were killed in Liberian factional fighting.)
Hawaiian crowned Miss America (4 words)
(Miss Hawaiian was crowned as Miss America)
Thailand interested in South African weapons (6 words)
(Thailand is interested in (purchasing) South African weapons.)
100 policewomen recruited for traffic duty (6 words)
(100 policewomen were recruited for their traffic duty.)
A ton of marijuana seized (5 words)
(A ton of marijuana was seized in a police raid.)
TV talk show criticized for alleged bias (7 words)
(A TV talk show was criticized for its alleged bias.)
Villagers paralysed by poisoned noodles
(The villagers were paralysed by the poisoned noodles.)

### The headlines with a subject and an infinitive verb:

- PDP *to iron* out traffic problem
- Aquino *to hold* referendum on fate of US base
- Lee Kwan Yew to *visit* Kazakhstan
- Three nations *to cooperate* on ships’ safety in Straits
- BMA *to build* roads to help City traffic flow
- Move to *save* wild elephants
- Laotian students *to be accepted* to study at NIDA
- ASEAN *to boost* Cambodian cause

### The headlines with a subject and an adjective phrase:

- Bush *popular despite slowdown* (Bush was still popular despite his slowdown.)
- Kotonishiki *victorious* (Kotonishiki was victorious.)
- Chuan *suitable* for premier (Chuan Leekpai was suitable for the premier post.)
The headlines with a subject and a prepositional phrase:

**Style** of **govt at stake** in B’desh
(The style of government was at stake in Bangladesh.)

**TA not in** a rush to enter satellite mobile phone venture
(Telecom Asia was not in a rush to enter the satellite mobile phone venture.)

Double standards **in Buri Ram**
(Double standards were used/practiced in Buri Ram.)

**Govt in bid to stop corruption**
(The government was in a bid to stop corruption.)

The headlines with a subject and a phrasal verb:

**Chuan** still wants to **beef up** military
(to beef up = to strengthen by addition, reinforcement, etc.)

Laos leader **rules out** post-poll policy shifts
(to rule out = to exclude by decision)

**Govt calls** for approval on helmet law
(to call for = to demand, require)

Oil price will **soar up** in 1999
(to soar up = to rise up with a rush)

Police **crack down** on students’ riots
(to crack down on = to suppress)
Hopewell *takes over sky* tram project  
(to take over = to assume control or possession of)

Opposition turns *down* Govt’s new budget  
(to turn down = to refuse, reject)

Troops ordered to *fan out* at Thai-Burma border  
(to fan out = to spread out like a fan or disperse)

UN clock *winds down* on loggers  
(to wind down = to become slack, relax, or come to an end slowly or time is running out)  
(to wind up = to get ready, close, or bring to an end)

Paiboon *clocks out* as director of EGAT  
(to clock out = to depart from work), (to clock in = to arrive at work)

Wimol *keep9 off* Class 5 party move  
(to keep off = to stay away from)

Clinton *banks* on nomination of Cabinet  
(to bank on = to count on, depend on)

Charles-Diana scandals *raked over* worldwide  
(to rake over = to discuss, gossip about)

Credit card giants *team up* on security for internet shopping  
(to team up = to co-operate)

PDP vows to *iron out* traffic problem  
(to iron out = to resolve or smooth as if using a hot iron)

Thailand *shrugs off* China’s warning  
(5 words)
New budget proposal all **screwed up**

**TV talk show lashed out yesterday**

**Exercise 1**

Fill in the following headlines with the given phrasal verbs. Be careful to use the correct form of the verbs.

**Example:** Clinton **banks** on Cabinet nod.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fan out</th>
<th>queue up</th>
<th>call for</th>
<th>team up</th>
<th>sit in</th>
<th>crack down on</th>
<th>shrug off</th>
<th>soar up</th>
<th>zip up</th>
<th>iron out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. RU students... **more** library hours.
2. Police... **vocational student riots.**
3. Lime price... **100 %**.
4. Plainclothesmen... at Queen Sirikit Convention Center for **ASEM**.
5. RU and Hua Mark police... **Bangkapi traffic jams.**
6. Govt... **concerns over freedom of speech.**
7. Fans of **“Mong Tang Moom” TV talk show... **their mouths.**
8. Holiday makers ......................... for last minute shopping spree.
9. Villagers ......................... to protest against dam construction.

Exercise 2

Fill in the following headlines with the phrasal verbs given. Use only the correct form of the verbs.

Example: Pramon calls off vehicle test.

fan out     queue up     call for      team up
sit in       beef up      shrug off    iron out
take over    split up     bank on      soar up
clock out    screw up     crack down on

1. Boon-uar ....................... as House Speaker.
2. RU students .................... for re-examinations.
3. Police.. ......................... heroin smugglers.
4. No way to ...................... traffic snarls in Bangkok.
5. RU students .................... to protest bus fare raise.
6. Saddam orders to ................ ai r defences.
7. Government and commercial banks........................ on security for credits cards.
8. Teenagers ....................... for tickets of “The Rock.”
9. China will....................... Hon g Kong in 1997.
10. Thai economy......................... new dream team.
11. Thailand..................China’s warning over Dalai Lama.
12. Living cost......................during inflation.
13. Firefighter.....................to control the tire.
15. Opposition may not...............new budget plan.

Exercise 3

Fill in the blanks with the phrasal verbs given.

lash out takes over call for
team up kicks off soar up
foiled up banks on crack down on

1. RU students....................more financial support.
2. TV watchers....................non-sense game show and dirty comedies.
3. RU and California University...................on academic cooperation.
4. Thai economy..................Baht value.
5. Bid to hijack US plane....................
7. Inflation rates....................
Exercise 4

Fill in the following headlines with the given phrasal verbs. Be careful to use only the correct form of the verbs.

Example: Clinton kicks off Olympics Games.

fan out    queue up    call for    sit in
team up    turn down    crack down on
iron out    take over    beef up

1. RU students.................... with Hua Mark police to ease traffic.
2. Police..................... heroin smuggling.
3. Holidays lovers................... for last minute shopping spree.
4. Villagers........................ to protest against dam construction.
5. Skytrain may............... traffic jams in downtown Bangkok.
6. Government........................ more VAT.
8. Security guards............... to protect ASEAN representatives.
9. Economic slump forces Thai people to................... brand name goods.
Exercise 5

Fill in the following blanks with the phrasal verbs given. Be careful to use the correct form of the verbs.

Example: Anand *rules out* conflict with military.
          Hong Kong *taken over* by China.

*kick out*  *iron out*  *lay off*  *shrug off*
*bank on*   *fan out*   *bust up*   *clock out*
*lash out*  *team up*   *crack down on*
*call for*  *soar up*   *screw up*  *beef up*

1. Saddam .................................. UN’s request of peace.
2. CTP leader ................................... T V talk show.
3. Police ............................... student rally.
4. RU and KU students ....................... against corruption issue.
5. Bangkok governor ...................... on Valentine’s Day.
6. Thai economy ........................... Thai people’s help.
8. Thai patrol police ...................... near Salween National Park.
9. Ramkhamhaeng University ................. student’s wearing uniforms.
10. Oil price ......................... b y 60 baht per litre.
13. All government grants .................. by economic recession.

Exercise 6

Fill in the blanks with the phrasal verbs given. Be careful to use the correct tense.

Example: TV fans told to zip up their mouths.

lash out take over call for back up
team up kick off soar up bank on
crack down on fan out queue up
sit in iron out screw up beef up
clock out split up shrug off foul up

1. RU faculties, .................. more academic freedom.
2. TV watchers .................. non-sense game shows and dirty comedies.
3. RU and California University .................. on academic cooperation.
4. Thai economy .................. Baht value.
5. Bid to hijack US plane ..................
6. Chuan scheduled to.............................. the 13th Asian Games.
7. Inflation rates............................... 
8. Police........................................ student riots.
11. Clinton may................................. party member of Democrat.
12. Saddam orders to........................... air force.
13. Teenagers................................. for tickets of “Titanic.”
14. Thai people................................. the warning to tighten their belt.
15. RU students................................. to protest the increase of credit fee.
16. Patrol police............................... on guard near the Thai-Burma border.
17. Snan................................. Snoh at the funeral of General Chartichai.
18. No way to................................. traffic snarls in Bangkok.
19. Parliament meeting........................... by unruly party members.
20. Democrat Party seems not to............. as predicted.

Exercise 7

Put the verbs in the following headlines into the correct form.

Example: Chuan welcomes ASEAN leaders.
          Gandhi killed by Hindu fanatic.

1. BMA (build)................................. roads to help City traffic flow.
2. Japan dads (want).......................... to fly from worries.
3. Villagers (paralyze)..... by poisoned noodles.

4. Kuwaiti couple (help)................ tigress deliver 3 cubs.

5. Statistics (show)............. women make better drivers.

6. Floodwaters (claim)..................3 5 in Bangladesh.

7. 45-kilo heroin (seize)......... in largest single haul this year.

8. Teenager (launch)............. AIDS assault.


10. 10,000 baht fine (await)............ litterbugs.

11. Woman (die)......................... in skyscraper inferno.

12. California governor (join)......... presidency race.

13. Hua Mark police (fine)............. traffic violators.

14. RU (open).................. School of Medicine in 2000.

Exercise 8

Put the verbs in the following headlines into the correct form.

Example: Somrak (win) wins Olympics gold medal.

Chavalit (name) named PM.

1. Security (tighten).... in Deng Xiaoping’s funeral.

2. Police (arrest).................. three riot students.

3. Plane crash (claim).................. 17 lives.


5. Chulalongkorn (nominate)........... Anand.
6. 10,000 baht tine (await) .................... litterbugs.
7. Americans (have) ....................... enough of Lewinsky.
8. Egypt (launch) ......................... attack against Israel.
9. California governor (join) ................. presidency race.
10. RU (open) ....................... School of Engineering in 1998.
11. Clinton (visit) ....................... Thailand for diplomatic talk.
12. Hua Mark police (tine) ................ traffic violators.
13. Bangkokians (warn) ..................... of heavy floods.
14. Policewomen (recruit) ................ to direct traffic jams.

Exercise 9

Put the verbs in the following headlines into the correct form.

Example: Thailand hosts Asian Games in 1998.

Traffic violators fined at least 500 baht.

1. BMA (build) ....................... sky trains to smooth traffic jams.
2. Thai people (budget) ..................... themselves from now on.
3. Pupils (scare) ....................... of AIDS.
4. Thai Baht (devalue) .....................
5. RU (sponsor) ....................... English Training Program.
6. Seminar participants (die) ............. in hotel inferno.
7. Police women (recruit) ................ to direct traffic jam.
8. Police (arrest) ....................... robbers of Thai Farmers Bank.

10. Thai economy (slow down) ................. for at least two years.

Exercise 10

Put the verbs in the following headlines into the correct form.

Example: Thailand (host) hosts Asian Games in 1998.

Traffic violators (fine) fined at least 500 baht.

1. BMA (launch) ................. electric passenger boats.
2. Agencies (order) .............. to lower barriers.
3. Ramkhamhaeng (buy) ............. educational equipment.
5. Chuan (plan) .................. to hold video conferences.
6. HM the King (mark) .............. 72nd birthday.
7. RU English Dept. (offer) ............. English summer camp.
8. Sky tram project (expect) ............ to be in use soon.
9. Drought (hit) ................. Thailand this summer.
10. Separatists in Malaysia (flee) ............... abroad.
11. 2 people (kill) .................. in car crash.
12. Ramadan (end) ................. for Thai Muslims.
13. Asnee’s remains (come) .............. home as wished in “Duen Phen”.
15. Blaze (gut) .................. French consulate in Argentina
Exercise 11

Put the verbs in the parentheses into the correct form of headlines.

Example: Gandhi killed by Hindu Fanatic.

1. Suu Kyi (bar) .................. from speech.
2. Businessmen (disillusion) ............... with political institutions.
3. Chavalit (defend) .................. move to pressure PM.
5. US and EU (hold) ................. talks on tariff cuts.
6. Fans (flock) .................. to Bird’s concert.
7. Somluck (win) .................. first Olympic gold medal.
8. Laem Chabang phase 2 expansion (cost) ........... double.
11. RU student (crown) ................. Miss/Mr. Good Will.
12. Banharn (agree) .................. to resign.
14. Cross border trade (expect) ............... to improve.
Exercise 12

Identify the following headlines by counting the number of words in each headline and stating whether each of them contains a main verb or a phrase. If it contains a phrase, state whether it is an infinitive phrase, prepositional phrase, adjective phrase or adverb phrase.

1. Jaruwan beats SEAG record in high jump
2. EX-CSD (Crime Suppression Division) chief Seri cleared of charges
3. Suchinda denies E. Europe trip aimed at buying arms
4. Students campaign against draft charter
5. Hundreds of people at rally urged to tight for freedom
6. 45-kilos heroin seized in largest single haul this year
7. Double standards in Buri Ram
8. Iraq takes tougher stand with UN
9. Floods leave 17 dead in Vietnam
10. Indonesian mission in Aust attacked
11. Italian and Chinese leaders hold talks
12. Aquino to hold referendum on fate of US base
13. Hunt for separatists as Assam strike end
14. Style of govt at stake in B’desh
15. Townships quiet after SA (South Africa) leaders sign pact
16. Lee Kuan Yew to visit Kazakhstan
17. Kids not spared in UK drive on crime
18. Centre-right under pressure in Portugal’s election buildup
19. Children trapped in jungle hell in Peruvian gold rush
20. Kotonishiki victorious
21. Teams set up to handle mass transit projects
22. Arctic explorers set new record
23. Pratunam to become the nation’s largest wholesale centre
24. TA (Telecom Asia) “not in a rush” to enter satellite mobile phone venture
25. American chamber chief to head regional council
26. Vietnamese president to visit US in October

Exercise 13

Choose each of the following verbs to fill each blank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>win</th>
<th>plans</th>
<th>attacks</th>
<th>test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hold</td>
<td>condemns</td>
<td>calls</td>
<td>give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dies</td>
<td>defers</td>
<td>urge</td>
<td>beats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asks</td>
<td>continues</td>
<td>stand up</td>
<td>says</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mahatir .................. trade union.
2. Italian and Chinese ........... .talks.
3. Israeli minister ........... Bush liar and anti-semitic.
4. Gorbachev ................. testimony about abortive coup
5. America ................ nuclear weapons.
7. China, Indonesia ............ .Adid as tennis crowns
8. Famed French violinist

9. China. big increase in espionage.

10. Prachuab study tour of US.

11. Terror under secret rule of Ne Vin.

12. Phra Prachak’s attorney forest temple is legal.

13. Villagers. P M to axe forest bill


15. Sulaiman for former champ Tyson.

16. Press charter panel to give weekly briefings.

Exercise 14

Change the verbs in the parentheses into participles to fill in each blank.

1. Thailand interest in South African weapons.

2. Compensation hike approve for expressway.

3. Tourist Police upgrade to division.


5. Cold storage firm sue for bankruptcy.

6. Chiangmai flights halt by blackout.

7. Forestry official shot by loggers.

8. Cambodian genocide still not forget.

9. 11 kill in truck collision.

10. Military tell to behave after bases pack reject.
Exercise 15

Change the verbs in the parentheses into infinitives.

1. LAD staff (join) ....................... prob e of Chalor.
2. Best chance yet (deal) ..................... with Vietnam.
3. Forum (discuss) ....................... ban on state firm unions.
4. Forestry Dept. (honor) ....................... mon k and 6 others.
5. Rice traders (visit) ....................... HK to sign deal.
6. CAT (Communication Authority of Thailand) (probe) ....................... evaluation panel
7. Three nations (cooperate) ....................... on ships’ safety in straits.
8. Sahaviriya OA (amend) ....................... policies.