



Headline-Writing Tip Sheet

Why headlines matter

- Entice the reader to read the first sentence.
- Create the first impression. It will either draw readers in or push them away.
- The headline will make or break the response.

4 Functions of Headlines

1. Get attention
 - Appeal to the reader's self interest
 - Give the reader news (Discover, Introducing...)
 - Use Words that Work
2. Select the audience.
 - "Spend Your Retirement at These Bargain Luxury Resorts"
3. Deliver a complete message
 - "Changing Tax Laws Could Hurt Small Businesses"
4. Draw the reader into the body copy
 - "Increase Your Financial Security in 5 Short Minutes"

8 headline types (From *The Copywriter's Handbook* by Robert W. Bly)

- Direct – "Free Expert Tax-Planning Advice"
- Indirect – arouses curiosity – "Productivity Secrets of High Performers"
- News – makes an announcement – "Introducing ..."
- How-To – "How to Start Your Homebased Biz with This Simple Kit"
- Question – "Have You Seen This Marketing Trap?"
- Command – Take This Action Now!
- Reason Why – "Seven Reasons Why You Should..."
- Testimonial – "I can't believe it works!"

More headline tips

- Include numbers
- Add an attractive adjective
- Use imperative call-to-action words
 - "Try These 10 Simple Tricks to Write a Catchy Headline"
- Negative superlatives - ("Never" or "Worst") has outperformed both positive superlatives ("Always or Best") and no superlative



Headline-Writing Tip Sheet (continued)

Use these numbers in headlines

A study of blog titles by Vengage showed:

- 10 – Best choice
- 5 – Close second
- 3, 4, 7 – Okay
- Never use 2 or teens
- Always write the numeral, not the word. Example: “Top 10 Hits”

Avoid

- Blind headlines – ones that don’t make sense until you read the lead.
- Cleverness that sacrifices clarity.

Write short headlines for mobile

- Headlines should stand on their own
- Don’t get your head(line) cut off by:
 - Google – keep to 55 characters or less
 - Social Media – keep to 55 characters or less
 - Mobile apps – less than 40 characters (8 words or fewer). or about 30 characters / 6 words or less to keep them above the fold

Free Headline Analyzing Tools

Headline Analyzer by [CoSchedule](https://coschedule.com/headline-analyzer) - Evaluates your titles and will even give you suggestions to improve them.

<https://coschedule.com/headline-analyzer>

[MonsterInsights](https://www.monsterinsights.com/headline-analyzer) - Looks at the strength of your headline and gives you a score between 1-100, where a score of 70 and above is considered very good.

<https://www.monsterinsights.com/headline-analyzer>

[Headline Analyzer by Content Row](https://www.contentrow.com/tools/headline-analyzer) lets you analyze up to 3 headlines per day without creating an account. You can check the strength of your headline based on things like strengths, suggestions, word choice, and emotional breakdown.

<https://www.contentrow.com/tools/headline-analyzer>

[Capitalize My Title](https://capitalizemytitle.com/headline-analyzer/)- Scores your article title, ad headline, or email subject for readability, SEO, and sentiment. There are a few other free to use tools on the site you might find helpful as well.

<https://capitalizemytitle.com/headline-analyzer/>