

# 实用新闻英语阅读教程

## A Practical Course in Newspaper Reading

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**Part One: A Guide  
to News Reading**





## Chapter I: A Guide to News Reading

### What is news?

In a macro sense, the word “news” may refer to any fresh information. It includes social or personal affairs. “Have you any news where your brother is staying?” means: “Do you know where your brother is recently staying?” “It’s no news to me” means: “I have heard about that (information).” But “Have you read the news in today’s newspaper?” means: “Have you learned about the important social events reported by today’s newspaper?”

“News”, in a more specific term, refers to reports of the latest social events by mass communication media such as newspapers, magazines, radios and televisions. News is fresh social information covering every field of human culture. It includes politics, economy, military, science and technology, ideology (education, religion, tradition, arts and literature), sports and entertainment.

## Where to get news?

We get news through different channels or different media—either through reading (newspapers and magazines), listening (to the radio) or watching (TV).

News media are institutes (organizations) which produce and provide news to the public. They belong to a broader social information system termed as Mass Communication, which also includes other media such as films, books, audio and video recordings.

Mass Communication Media or Mass Media may be categorized into the Printed Media and Electronic Media. The former includes newspapers, magazines and books. The latter includes radios, televisions, films, and audio and video recordings. Newspapers, radios and televisions represent the mainstream of news media in the world today.

However, an information revolution brought about by the development in computer and telecommunication technology has been dramatically changing this situation. The revolution is creating a new global communication system—the world information superhighway, which is characterized with the global computer network (the Internet as its infrastructure) and multimedia technology. New forms of media such as “electronic newspaper”, “on-line news service”, and “virtual news-room” are providing news in an interactive way through multimedia system. The new media forms will greatly change news presentation. However, the basic ways of understanding news information remain to be reading, listening and watching. And news reading skill is always the fundamental skill of

understanding news information.

## **News reading skill**

To read and understand news information in an efficient way, one basically needs to have a certain language competence, knowledge about news styles and encyclopedic knowledge of the world.

### **Development of language competence**

You need the basic grammar and a vocabulary of about 3,000 to 5,000 words to read and understand a news report of mid-level difficulty. Besides, in the process of learning, you need to broaden your vocabulary with high frequency of occurrence in news reports, and learn more terms of expressions in news style.

### **Common knowledge of English newspaper**

It is helpful to have some knowledge about today's English newspaper before practicing reading it. This may involve several important aspects:

## News classification

Generally a newspaper contains news and non-news items.

News includes factual reports of news events without opinion. They may be provided as;

**A. Wire or telegraph news**—news provided by world telegraphic news agencies such as AP, AFP, UPI, Reuters, Itar-Tass and Xinhua.

**B. Local or city news**—news written by newspaper's staff reporters in the home country, or as dispatches sent back from abroad by the newspaper's foreign correspondents.

Non-news items include;

**A. Commentaries**—opinions of news events of public concerns, including: editorial (opinion of the newspaper editorship), news analyses (written by reporters or specialists), opinions (from readers or experts), and column articles.

**B. Advertisements**—include Display Ads and Classified Ads.

**C. Others**—include comics, stories, games and other entertainment items.

## Leading English newspapers in the world

Newspaper readers must get familiar with the following leading English newspapers in the world:

### The US-based

*The Washington Post*

*The New York Times*

*The Wall Street Journal*  
*The US News and World Reports*  
*The Christian Science Monitor*  
*USA Today*

### **The UK-based**

*The Times*  
*The Sunday Times*  
*Daily Telegraph*  
*Financial Times*

### **The HK-based**

*Hong Kong Standard*  
*South China Morning Post*  
*Eastern Express*  
*Asian Wall Street Journal*  
*International Herald Tribune*

### **The China-based**

*China Daily*

## Stylistic features of news reports

A news report contains three parts: the headline, the lead, and the body. The traditional style of reporting is described as the Inverted Pyramid Structure—a presentation of news messages in descending order of importance. We shall explain each part of the structure.

## The headline

News headline has its grammatical and vocabulary features.

### **A. Grammatical features of headlines are :**

- a. omission of functional words
- b. special usage of tenses
- c. use of some punctuation in place of words

**a. Omission of functional words**—Most headlines omit articles “a/an/the” and verb “to be (is/am/are/was/were)”. For example;

(1) ( ) Railway ( ) to boost local economies

(Omission of “the” and “is”)

(2) Qian ( ) to sign ( ) test-ban treaty at ( ) UN assembly

(Omission of “is”, “a” and “the”)

(3) ( ) Poverty relief ( ) high on ( ) Party’s agenda

(Omission of “the”, “is” and “the”)

(4) ( ) Israeli PM ( ) on ( ) European tour

(Omission of “the”, “is” and “a”)

**b. Special usage of tenses**—Most headlines use only three tenses—the simple present, the present continuous, and the simple future. In some rare case the simple past tense is used.

The simple present tense states the recent event or informs of a planned social activity. The present continuous tense describes a situation or development. The simple future tense predicts or speculates a development or an outcome. The simple past tense tells a new development or discovery related to a past event.

Following are some examples:

### **Headlines in simple present tense:**

(5) China aids Pakistan in ( ) textile field

- (6) French calls for closer Sino ties
- (7) Shelling shatters peace talks in Angola
- (8) Zhu plans visit to Japan soon
- (9) UN head issues ( ) alert for ( ) Bosnia air action

**Notes:** When the sentence is in passive voice, sometimes a past participle resembles the past form and it must not be mistaken for a past tense.

For example:

- (10) US ( ) poised to ditch Japan talks  
(Omission of "is")
- (11) Cease-fire ( ) announced in Angola  
(Omission of "is")
- (12) S. Africa ( ) condemned world-wide for apartheid  
(Omission of "is")
- (13) US exports of prison made goods ( ) criticized  
(Omission of "is")

**Notes:** In the sentence pattern of "verb to be + predicative", the "verb to be" is omitted. For example:

- (14) US, Japan ( ) head to head on cellular telephones  
(Omission of "are")
- (15) Big power project ( ) due to launch in Guangxi  
(Omission of "is")
- (16) More areas ( ) open to overseas investors  
(Omission of "are")
- (17) Guiling Co. ( ) on exchange in Canada  
(Omission of "is")

**Headlines in present continuous tense:**

The verb "to be" is omitted. For example:

- (18) ( ) Hong Kong port ( ) thriving

(Omission of “the” and “is”)

(19) Visitors ( ) flocking to Mao's birth place

(Omission of “are”)

(20) Grain prices ( ) confusing farmers in ( ) US

(Omission of “are” and “the”)

(21) US ethical behavior ( ) sliding, ( ) poll shows

(Omission of “is” and “the”)

### Headlines in simple future tense:

This involves two forms: using modal verb “may” or auxiliary verb “shall/will” and “verb to be + to do”. The second form is used much more frequently than the first. For example:

(22) S. Korea may cancel ( ) war games

(23) Arafat ( ) to meet Peres in Cairo

(24) Rights for ( ) highway ( ) to be sold to foreigners

(25) Transport facilities ( ) to gain ( ) facelift

**c. Punctuation for words** — Comma “,” stands for “and” or “say”, and colon “:” and dash “—” for “say”. For example:

(26) China not trading rhino, tiger (= China not trading rhino and tiger)

(27) China, Canada find they stand on common ground (= China and Canada find they stand on common ground)

(28) China committed to peace—Qiao (= China committed to peace, Qiao said)

(29) Iraq has no nuclear materials now—IAEA (= Iraq has no nuclear materials now, according to IAEA)

(IAEA = International Atomic Energy Agency)

(30) Qian: HK policy unchanged (= Qian said: HK policy unchanged)



**B. *Headline vocabulary has the following features :***

- a. the frequent use of short words
- b. the frequent use of acronyms
- c. the frequent use of noun groups as pre-modifiers

**a. Frequent use of short words**—To save space, headlines use short words with only one or two syllables to stand for longer synonyms. There are about 300 such short words in frequent use. Learning as many as possible of these words helps one understand headlines better and faster. Following are some of common occurrence.

**accord** = treaty; agreement

**aid** = help; assist

**aide** = assistant; adviser

**arm** = weapon; weaponry

**bid** = resolution; attempt; decision

**body** = organization; institute

**boost** = support; increase; promote

**chief, head** = leader; chairman; president; governor

**curb** = control; suppress; crack down; cut

**expo** = exposition (international show of products) exhibition

**fake** = counterfeit; coinage; forged

**hike** = increase

**hold** = arrest; detain; kidnap

**mar** = obstruct

**mart** = market

**mull** = consider

**name** = elect; appoint; designate

**probe** = investigation

**quit** = resign