

English News Writing and Reading

英语新闻写作与阅读

石义彬 纪莉



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语新闻写作与阅读/石义彬, 纪莉. —武汉: 武汉大学出版社,
2005. 6

ISBN 7-307-04424-2

I. 英… II. ①石… ②纪… III. 英语—阅读教学—高等学校—
教材 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2005)第 000175 号

责任编辑: 春风

责任校对: 黄添生

版式设计: 支 笛

出版发行: 武汉大学出版社 (430072 武昌 珞珈山)

(电子邮件: wdp4@whu.edu.cn 网址: www.wdp.com.cn)

印刷: 湖北省孝感日报社印刷厂

开本: 787×980 1/16 印张: 12.5 字数: 228 千字 插页: 1

版次: 2005 年 6 月第 1 版 2005 年 6 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 7-307-04424-2/H·367 定价: 22.00 元

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Preface

English News writing and Reading

Newspapers we read today have their roots in 17th century Europe. As a most significant medium and a most profitable industry, the newspaper is such a valuable invention for mankind. It offers large numbers of information for people to consume. It helps people to exchange opinions and to share cultural values. It provides entertainments and encourages people to communicate. It combines the world into a "global village." And of course, it also provides good samples as reading materials. But for students of Journalism schools, English newspapers are far from reading materials to practice their language ability. It is a field to learn English news writing and journalist practices as well as to experience different cultures. Most of the time, students may find that the difficulties of reading and understanding a news report do not come from the language itself, but from the misunderstanding of a very familiar word in an unfamiliar context. We may find words in a dictionary easily, but it would not be as easy as that to find out what the writer exactly means and tries to convey. Thus, to read English newspapers would be not only a great challenge to students' vocabulary reserves, but also an exam of students' knowledge on journalism. We hope this book can contribute to help students appreciate English newspapers in a professional way, and improve their ability to understand English news reports properly and accurately.

—Author

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英语新闻写作与阅读
English News Writing and Reading

PART ONE

- Chapter 1: The Front Page ●
- Chapter 2: The Headlines(I) ●
- Chapter 3: The Headlines(II) ●
- Chapter 4: The Lead ●
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Chapter 1

The Front Page

English News Writing and Reading

The Structure of a Newspaper

When you have a newspaper in hand, the first thing you do is to skim it so as to find out the most interesting part you want to read. An excellent newspaper will win you over by its style and characters a whole. But you will still search out the most attractive part for you because everyone still has his/her own reading preference. In a typical English newspaper, you will usually find the following sections everyday:

The Front Page: The first page of a newspaper.

International: This section invites you to read the headlining world news, the bulk being political coverage.

National: This section invites you to read the most important coverage of national news.

The Metro: This section provides all the regional news, columns and analysis found in the area where the newspaper is located.

Business/ Finance: This section provides information on the stock market and finance, news stories with analysis behind the information.

Sports: This section gives records of important sports events, and in-depth sports reporting and analysis.

Arts: This section helps you understand the artistic pursuits from movies to museums and much more.

Aside from these sections, different newspapers have a wide variety of special sections, which will be edited and published on a certain day of the week. For example, in the *New York Times*, there is the **Dining In / Dining Out** section, which allows you to discover fresh tastes, trends and recipes for novices and gourmet chefs alike every Wednesday.

Other sections we may see on different days of the week in one

newspaper may include:

Travel: This section provides tips on where to travel and how to have a good time.

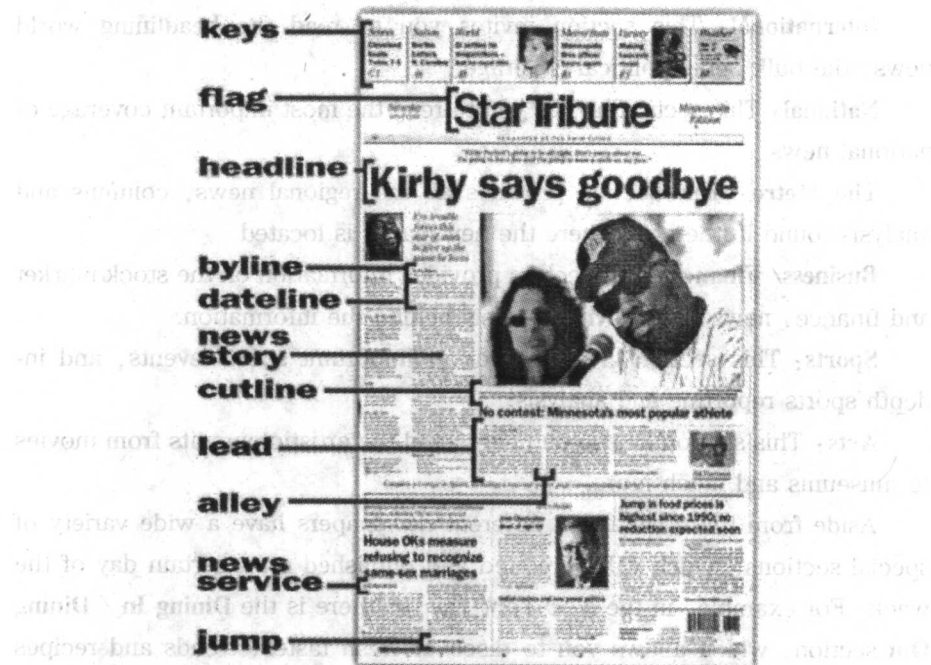
Obituary: This section gives the latest story of people who have recently deceased and recalls their legacy.

And so on

Introduction of the Front Page

The front page is the part you will read first whenever you have a newspaper in hand. Unlike other pages, it is the **FACE** of a newspaper on which editors carefully select and arrange the information. Indeed, it is quite normal for big international newspapers to have a “front page office” with its own editor.

An example of a front page:



Terms

Keys: Headlines that invite the reader to read stories found in other sections of the paper.

Flag: The newspaper's name as it appears at the top of the first page; also known as the logotype or nameplate.

Headline: Words in large type at the top of a story telling what the story is about; also called a head.

Byline: The reporter's name, which appears at the head of the news or a picture story.

Dateline: Words at the beginning of a story that give the story's place of origin.

News Story: A story about a news event.

Cutline: Explanatory information under a picture or illustration; also called a caption.

Lead: (pronounced [leed]) The first paragraph or two of a news story, telling who, what, when, where, why/how.

Alley: The white space between the columns of news stories.

News Services: Name that indicates that information from more than one wire service was used in writing the news story.

Jump: To continue a story from one page to another.

Features of the Front Page

We need to be aware of that the front page has very different functions for a newspaper:

- The front page shows the most important or most dramatic stories and is constituted by those stories. The lead story in the front page is always presented in a heavier, larger headline font than other stories.

- The front page always carries a wide range of different kinds of news, keeping a balance of local, national and international news.

- The front page has the table of contents that guides you through the whole paper.

- The selection and the design of the front page news shows the

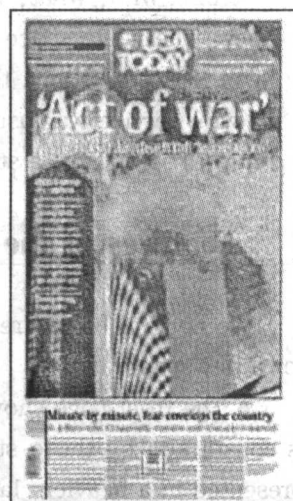
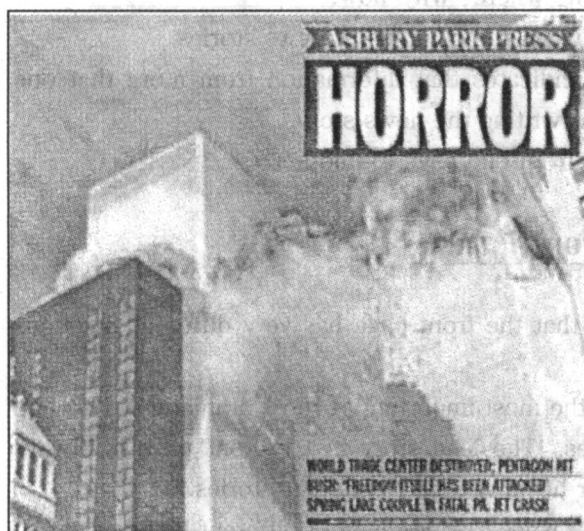
characteristics, style and personality of the newspaper.

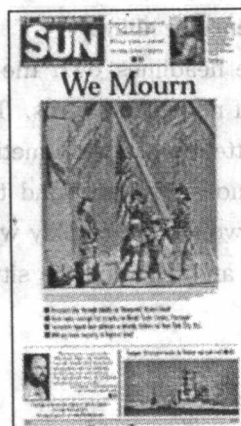
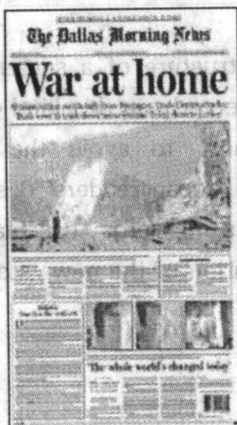
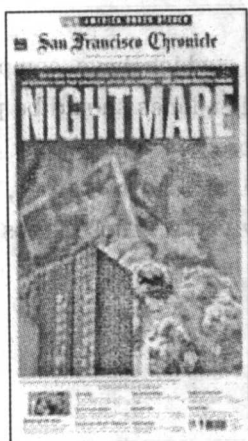
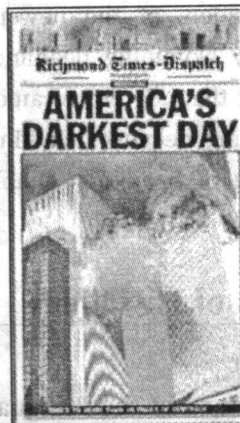
Discussion

1. Read carefully a front page of an English newspaper. For example, the *Times*, or *USA Today*. Compare the front page of the English newspaper you selected with one familiar Chinese newspaper. What are the differences between them on the number and size of stories, advertisements and pictures? What are the differences in the proportion of local to national news?

2. Read the table of content carefully of an English newspaper under the instruction of your teacher. Pick up one of the stories you are most interested in and find out where to find the whole story.

3. Down below are pictures of 10 outstanding front pages on the day after the 9.11 attack. Appreciate the design of these front pages and think about how those compelling front page reflected the enormity of the news and carried out successfully the main functions of front pages.





Chapter 2

The Headlines (I)

English News Writing and Reading

Introduction

The headlines are the titles of a news report. They are larger than the text, used to attract the attention of readers and inform them of what the text contains. Readers of the newspaper usually decide which story to read thoroughly by skimming headlines of the whole newspaper. So, it is the editors' belief that "foremost among the skills of the information presenter is headline writing because headlines themselves are works of art." A good understanding of headlines enables readers to successfully understand the whole report.

Types of Headlines

On the Standard of the Language Feature

1. Sentence headlines:

The headlines own the structure of a sentence, which have complete forms of nouns and verbs. The verbs in this kind of headlines should be paid great attention to. Sometimes, to avoid the boredom caused by the monotonous structure and to arouse readers' desire to read the story, the editors would like to play with the words, especially verbs. Those verbs are unusual and describe the situation of the news story vividly.

Attack on Baghdad begins

**ANGER MOUNTS
IN ARAB WORLD**

Fan kills wife

**COFFEE
PRICES
SOAR**

2. Phrase headlines:

The headlines are constituted by phrases instead of sentences. We see phrase headlines more frequently in the features. They are more difficult to understand because of the incompleteness of the structure, and sometimes they just call our attention to the story and we can only know their real meaning after finishing the stories. What's more, the violation of grammar rules in this kind of headline always indicates the tense and the voice of the story.

3 INJURED IN BOMB ATTACK

**Beijing to build
mini world parks**

YOUNG,
JOBLESS,
HOPELESS

US-EUROPE FOOD RIFT

On the Standard Column

The newspaper normally has 8 or 6 columns. According to the numbers of columns taken by headlines, the headlines could be divided into "one-column head," "two-column head" and so on.

● **Banner:** A spread headline that stretches across the width of the paper is called a "banner." It is used when the editor feel the need to trumpet major news. Tabloid newspapers use a modification of this style because of their format, and the result is a very brief headline, often no more than five or six words that pretty much fills the page. Newspapers like the *New York Times* seldom use banners except when remarkably influencing things happened. In the *New York Times* history, it used the banner in front page editing only four times.

The Parts of Headlines

Headlines may contain one deck or several decks. The different parts of the headlines have different names and usages.

● **Line:** a single-deck headline which consists of a word or group of words arranged side by side on the same level.

● **Spread:** a line that extends across multiple columns is often called a "spread."

● **Main:** in a headline with more than one deck, the section with the largest and boldest type is called "main." The main contains the essential facts.

• Readout: a secondary line or lines below the main, often in a contracting font or in italics. The readout amplifies or explains the main and often uses that same subject. It is smaller than the main.

• Kicker/ label: a line that appears just above the main is called a “kicker” or “label.” The principal function of the kicker is to add emphasis to the main.

A main:	The Age of Innocence?
A readout:	Inside every killer, there's a six-year-old
A kicker/label	Under Autumn Snow
A main	Footnotes to Village's Sorrowful Decade

Language Features of the Headlines

Tense

Headlines have their own special linguistic rules. Read the following 10 headlines, tell your classmates which ones you think refer to the past? Which ones do you think refer to the future? Which ones refer to present situation?

**PUTIN MEETS PAKISTANI
ENDING LONG BREACH**

U.S. Jets attack Southern Iraq

Job Market Shows a Rise in January

BUSH SEEKS TAX CUTS HE HAD SCORNE

BECHHAM JOINS REAL MADRID

"CHICAGO" TOPS OSCAR NOMINEES

THAMES APPROACHING DANGER LEVEL

Jordan Pressing US to Offer

Exile to Hussein

DINNER TO BAR SOME REPORTERS

**A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE US
TROOPS IN GERMANY**

Special Grammar Rules in Headlines:

- Simple present tense in headlines indicates past meaning
- Continuous participle indicates present meaning
- Infinitive form indicates future meaning
- Past participle indicates passive voice