

## How to write great headlines

### **It's specific.**

*Pretend an elevator door is shutting, and you want to tell someone on the other side about a story. This exercise will help you think of headlines that get right to the point and aren't vague.*

### **It's easy to understand.**

*People will likely see your headline while scanning social media on their phone. So keep it simple. If it's long and confusing, they'll likely move on to something else after a couple of seconds.*

### **It leads to a reaction.**

*Imagine someone seeing your headline for the first time. How will that person react? Curious? Surprised? Happy? Sad? Hopefully not disinterested or confused.*

### **It's not overly clever.**

*Be cautious of the overly clever headline. Creativity is a good thing. And you want your headline to stand out. But be careful you're not distracting people with a pun or an outdated cultural reference. Avoid being clever for the sake of being clever.*

### **It captures the spirit of the story.**

*Is it a happy story? A serious one? Is it an essay? An investigative piece? Is it written with a unique voice? Is it hard news? The style and tone of the story should be reflected in the headline.*

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