

## LET'S START WITH A YELLOW PENCIL

An ordinary yellow pencil. Nothing could be more mundane. Maybe you write with a pen, but we'll use a plain yellow pencil to learn how to dig out the copy features to write an ad.

The client is a stationer. Our job is to write an ad to sell pencils. We have a small budget—no full-page ads here, just two inches in the local newspaper.

What can you say about a pencil? Let's begin by making a list of all the features and benefits of a yellow pencil. List everything you can think of. Try for 100 items. You don't think you can say that much about a yellow pencil? Try it. Write down the features and benefits.

I'll show you my list and you will be able to pick out the most powerful benefits. The ad will almost write itself.

- Color is yellow
- Bright yellow
- 6 inches long
- Octagonal shape
- Rubber eraser
- Erases cleanly
- Metal band
- Feels smooth
- Lead is No. 2
- Writes smoothly
- Comfortable grip
- Costs 25 cents
- Worth 50 cents
- Wood is cedar
- Smells nice
- Makes a sharp point
- Lasts a long time
- Writer's tool
- Fine art tool
- Expert tool
- Genius instrument
- Investment genius
- Everyday Liz
- My favorite
- Everybody wants my pencil
- Don't steal my pencil
- The best for less
- Doodles nicely
- Crossword winner
- Scribbles fast
- Special pencil sale
- Save 50%
- Act fast before sold out

Try to put some of these benefits and features together. You'll have to make changes as you go. That's all right. You need a way to start thinking without mentally censoring ideas before you examine them.

*Here is a major writing secret: Write every idea down. Write it down even if you think it's junk. Don't edit mentally until all the ideas are down in writing. For most people, mental editing is a choke that interferes with all those stupendous ideas sitting a little further back.*

You will be surprised at the number of features you can write down. Some are minor, some more important. This listing process gets your mind working on the problem in a different way than you are used to.

Every time you have a new copywriting project, remember the yellow pencil and use it as your guide.

## Here Are Some Sample Headlines

### EVERYBODY WANTS

### MY FAVORITE

### CROSSWORD PENCIL

### WRITER'S TOOL

### ON SALE TOMORROW . . . 1/2 PRICE.

### SALE!

### THE BEST WRITING PENCIL

Regularly 50 cents . . . 25 cents.

*Now comes the body copy:*

Beautiful, bright yellow, genuine cedar pencils.

Smooth writing No. 2 lead. Erases cleanly. Feels so comfortable.

Sale 25 cents. Reg. 50 cents.

Figure 20 TELL A STORY. Newsy information story-style headline.

## Who loses in a strike?

The strike against General Electric is costly for everybody.

Your headline should telegraph what you want to say in simple language. Readers rarely stop to decipher the meaning of obscure headlines. That goes for sideways and upside down headlines. Who cares about type that's hard to read?

People are always on the lookout for new products, or new improvements, or new styles and new fashions, or grand openings.

Figure 21 FEATURE STORY HEADLINES. Long feature story-style headline used by many newspapers in special sections. Very powerful.

**The new  
Mercedes-Benz 250:  
so "over-engineered"  
it's loafing—even  
at grueling turnpike speeds.**

### Targeted Headlines

- Ladies' sample shoes. Narrow widths.
- Japanese antiques, crafts, textiles at wholesale prices.
- House paint guaranteed not to fade, blister, or flake for ten years.

Select your prospects carefully. When you advertise a product or service consumed by a special group, it pays to "flag" that group: football fans, beer drinkers, going to Europe?, singles, getting married?, mothers. Figure 22 shows an ad that targets people who need to speak Spanish in a hurry. It's direct and simple. It reaches out for exactly those people who can buy the service.

You have only a fraction of a second to trigger a reader's interest, then you may have a few more seconds to present more benefits. Don't waste it.

Think about all those mystery ads that leave you wondering. What are they selling? What are they offering? What are those advertisers talking about? Who are they talking to? Not me. These are ads that are so clever we can't figure out why they exist. Don't waste time on them. Unless the headline catches your prospect's interest with something important in his or her life, don't bother.

### How Many Words Should You Put in Your Headline?

There are different opinions on this. After all, "Ttch" and "Scratch" were one-word masterpieces. If you can get the benefit across briefly, go for it. But if you need more words, don't hesitate.

When the New York University School of Retailing ran headline tests with the cooperation of a big department store, they found that headlines of ten words or longer actually sold

the first paragraph in a letter, and your greeting on the telephone. With a good headline, you're on your way to a good ad. Your headline must stop your prospect with a believable promise of benefit.

People are smart. They won't part with their money unless they think a good value is offered.

In a newspaper or magazine, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. If you don't sell the product in your headline, you have wasted 80 percent of your readership. And wasted a lot of money. Headlines that promise a benefit sell more than those that don't.

Figure 15 shows three different restaurant ads, all the same size, all with sparkle and zesty, intriguing headlines and copy. This packs a lot of selling into small space ads.

### Put Your Store Name in the Headline

Make sure readers can connect your store with the benefit in the headline—instantly. Don't let the reader wonder whose ad it is.

Your ad will make contact with your regular customers. They like your store. Each time they see your ad it serves as a reminder that your store is a nice place to do business. Each reminder could stimulate a recommendation and that means more business for you. Figures 16-18 show the added strength of putting the advertiser's name in the headline. Even with plain vanilla-style type the advertiser's name adds more power to the message.

### News-Style Headlines

- Just 30 minutes changed their lives!
- New medical weight reduction plan.
- New York colorist arrives at town beauty salon.

Figure 15 THREE DIFFERENT COPY TREATMENTS. Same objective, same size space. How to say Happy New Year with style, class, great spirit, and super salesmanship. Each ad in its own style says come celebrate with us. But ohh! do they have different personality appeals. Strong headlines. Good ads.

**RING IN THE NEW  
IN PARIS**  
at Our  
Gala New Year's Eve Fête

Steak Dinner and French Specialties  
Bubbling with all the champagne  
you can drink. Dancing... to the new  
and nostalgic melodies of a fine  
musical group. Festive hats and  
noisemakers for all revelers.

All surrounded by the resplendent  
statuary, crystal chandeliers, sensuous  
settees, unusual paintings, rich draperies  
that made La Belle Epoque so belle.

\$17.50 per person Reserve Today  
10 PM till 2 AM GR 7-3300

**Charles FRENCH RESTAURANT**  
452 Avenue of the Americas (10th St.)  
Open 7 days from noon. Sunday Brunch.  
Valet Parking. Mlle. Nina plays the harp at Dinner.

Longchamps... a growing world of mood, food and excitement.  
Larry Elman, President; Alan Lewis, Executive Vice-President.

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Figure 16 STORE NAME IN HEADLINE. Put the store name in the headline. Readers want to know who is talking.

**Now you don't need much equity in your home to get a tax-deductible loan.**

**Now you don't need much equity in your home to get a Bank of New York tax-deductible loan.**

Figure 17 STORE NAME STRENGTHENS THE AD. The advertiser's name in the headline gives it more punch.

**Free evening and weekend airtime through July 31st**

**Bell Atlantic Mobile Free evening and weekend airtime through July 31st**

Figure 12 FAMOUS AD. John Caples wrote, "They laughed when I sat down at the piano . . ." it ran in national magazines for years. It has a long copy headline. The headline is set in upper and lower case type. The illustration drawing looks old-fashioned now. Try to imagine it with new modern photography. Notice the coupon. The coupon improves the pulling power of the ad. This is long copy (over 500 words). It's interesting all the way to the end of the story.



## They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano But When I Started to Play!—

ARTHUR had just played "The Rose Tree." The room fell silent as I finished with a dramatic flourish. I decided that this would be my debut. To the amazement of all my friends, I strode confidently over to the piano and sat down.

"Jack is up to his old tricks," somebody checked. "The crowd laughed." They were all making fun of me. "You can't make a thing out of that!"

"Who can't play?" I heard a girl whisper to Arthur.

"Arthur," he said, "you can't play. But just you watch him. This is going to be good."

I decided to make the most of the situation. With mock dignity I drew out a silk handkerchief and lightly dusted the keys. Then I rose and gave a flourish to the music. A quarter of a century ago, a vaudeville star named Padrazewski did in a vaudeville sketch.

"What do you think of this execution?" called a voice from the rear.

"We're in favor of it!" came back the answer, and the crowd roared with laughter.

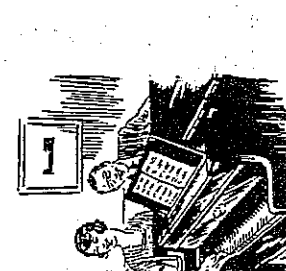
Then I started to play. Instantly a tense silence fell on the room. The first few notes were played through the first few months of my life. I had never before in my life heard such breath-taking melody.

I played on and as I played I forgot the people around me. The music was mine. The little world I lived in seemed to fade—retired to the background. Only they who were there with me. They were the only ones who were there with me.

They were so beautiful and so

### Pick Your Instrument

- Ukulele
- Violin
- Trumpet
- Drum
- Clarinet
- Saxophone
- Flute
- Harmonica
- Accordion
- Blues Harp
- Slide Guitar
- Steel Drum
- Electric Guitar
- Piano
- Contra Bass
- Flugelhorn
- Trumpet
- Clarinet
- Saxophone
- Flute
- Harmonica
- Accordion
- Blues Harp
- Slide Guitar
- Steel Drum
- Electric Guitar



the lowest registered they get, and the price, I liked best. Nothing stopped me. I could play what I wanted. And I never did have any special talent for music!

### Play Any Instrument

You can play any instrument in an afternoon. You can't go wrong with this simple new method which has already shown 30,000 students how to play any instrument. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special talent. Just take one of our instruments and the U. S. School will do the rest. And bear in mind that each state will be the same—just a few cents a day. No matter whether you are a girl, beginner or advanced student. Start and send the convenient coupon today. Write to: U. S. School of Music, 1931 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

### Send for Our Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson

Thousands of successful students never dreamed they possessed musical ability until a letter from the U. S. School of Music came. A letter which we read entirely without cost with our interesting free booklet. . . . about wanting to play your favorite instrument—if you really want to play, you can't go wrong with this simple new method. No cost—no obligation. Right now we are sending out 100,000 free booklets and demonstration lessons. Start and send the convenient coupon today—before it's too late to gain the benefit of this new method. Write to: U. S. School of Music, 1931 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

### U. S. School of Music, 1931 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

Please send me your free booklet, "Music Lessons for All," and a demonstration lesson of your Special Offer. I am interested in the following instrument:

Have you more instruments? . . . . .

Name . . . . . (Please write plainly)

Address . . . . .

went out of style. They sold courses for other instruments but nothing equaled the demand for their piano course.

Another famous mail order ad was written by Victor Schwab. It also had a headline that most people still recognize: HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE. This ad had over 500 words of copy. And a coupon at the bottom. Ads like these are still running in *Popular Mechanics* and other "how-to" publications selling home study courses to thousands of readers.

Here are some more examples. You can use these headlines and copy ideas in your ads. Just change the words to your own words. With a small change or a little twist, they can work for you.

My friends chuckled when I started to bake cakes and pies. But when they tasted my chocolate cheesecake . . .

Use a coupon at the bottom and offer a FREE SAMPLE TASTING of strawberry, cherry, or chocolate cheesecake.

New Yorkers always search for genuine Jewish-style deli sandwiches.

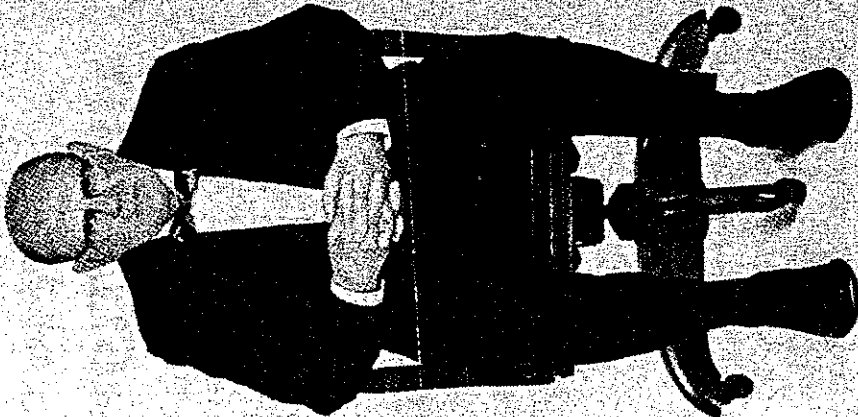
Until they taste my corned beef or pastrami on rye . . .

Open your mouth wide to chomp down on our two-inch high sandwiches. Six full ounces in every serving. Our corned beef and pastrami is actually pickled and prepared in New York City and shipped to us daily. Come in for an old-fashioned, delicious taste, today.

I thought I'd found the world's best pizza with pepperoni, mushrooms, and fresh broccoli. Until I tasted Numero Uno . . .

That's what advertising selling is really all about. Today, television late you take this same product story and show it with

Figure 13 SPELLS OUT THE SALES PROBLEM. "I don't know who you are," really says it well. This ad clearly outlines the job your advertising has to do.



*"I don't know who you are.  
I don't know your company.  
I don't know your company's product.  
I don't know what your company stands for.  
I don't know your company's customers.  
I don't know your company's record.  
I don't know your company's reputation.  
Now--what was it you wanted to sell me?"*

**MORAL:** Sales start before your salesman calls--with business-publication advertising.

**McGRAW-HILL**  
market-directed  
**PUBLICATIONS**

Figure 14 WHAT'S ON SALE. Winter clearance... what's on sale? Unless you are a regular customer of this store, you haven't any idea what they have on sale.

**Winter Clearance**

# SALE

**50%-80% OFF**

**3 DAY BONANZA**  
**FEB. 2 - FEB. 4**

**Mary's Barn**  
1234 Bean St.  
Englewood, NJ 201-201-1234

of store this is. What do they sell? For men, women, children? At what price range? Unless you have shopped there recently you probably haven't any idea what merchandise is in stock. Too many retailers make this lazy copy mistake.

**START WITH THE HEADLINE**

**Headlines Make Ads Work**

Every message should have a headline. This is the first...