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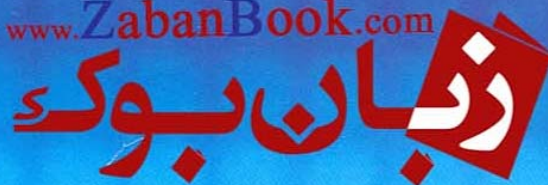
# Reading English Newspapers



A Coursebook for the Students of English Language and Literature

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## Reading English Newspapers

**READING ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS** takes a linguistic approach to the discourse of newspapers trying to help the students of English as a foreign language with the problems that may make English newspapers difficult for non-native speakers to read.

### **READING ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS**

- Explains, in plain English, the structure of a news article, as well as the different components of a newspaper
- Provides the readers with a number of exercises to practice what they have learned in each unit
- Is accompanied by a CD of the audio files of each unit to give readers an opportunity to further practice their English
- Is suitable for self-study and classroom use
- Is geared toward the needs of EFL students in Iran

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## Preface

This book aims to improve the university students' skills in reading journalistic English, and help them with the problems that may make English newspapers difficult for non-native speakers to read. It does not take a reading comprehension approach to the topic based on the assumption that the students have already had extensive practice of traditional reading skills.

The book is organized into eight units. Unit 1 offers an introduction to the medium of newspaper discussing general issues and terms related to this widely used means of mass communication. Units 2, 3, and 4 elaborate on the different parts of a newspaper news article. Units 5, 6, and 7 correspond to sections or pages shared by most English daily newspapers, namely feature stories, editorials, and advertisements. Unit 8 stresses the need for a critical approach to the reading of newspapers and pinpoints the features to be taken into account for such an approach. Each unit is followed by a number of activities, which provide the students with an opportunity to assess their understanding of the unit and give them some practice in the area they have just studied.

A large number of sources have been used in compiling the book. Many of the definitions and ideas are taken verbatim from the books and papers on the topic. Acknowledgement for the citation of definitions and ideas, however, are not made within the body of the text. The materials resorted to are cited in the bibliography. Extensive use has also been made of Internet resources and papers.

# 1

## Newspaper

### **Unit Objectives:**

In this introductory unit you will get a general view of the medium of newspaper. You will learn about such general issues as types of newspapers, functions of the newspaper in society, different sections of the newspaper office, the process of developing news stories, the codes the newspaper uses to present news, the importance of the front page of the newspaper, and the structure of news stories. The chapter provides a background for a more technical discussion of the components of a newspaper and the journalistic style of writing.

### Introduction

A publication printed and distributed at regular intervals containing news, opinion, editorials, comment columns, entertainment features, and other matter is ordinarily referred to as newspaper. Though the term 'newspaper' leaves the impression that it contains only news, a newspaper, in addition to news, contains other matter which may not be strictly defined as news. A typical Western newspaper provides its readers with such non-news items as editorials, personal and syndicated columns, letters to the editor, lifestyle, news analyses, photographs, comic strips and cartoons, cross-word puzzles, weather reports, horoscopes, stock market quotations, classified ads, recipes, etc.

Despite the advent of such powerful rival forms of mass media as television and the radio, the newspaper still remains a powerful source of news and information and serves as an influential medium in keeping people informed about what is happening in the world and, thereby, in extending their knowledge and deepening their understanding.

The newspaper serves many purposes in the modern society: it informs by supplying facts, figures, scores, prices, charts, maps, photos and illustrations; it educates by going beyond basic facts in the in-depth analysis of columns, commentaries and editorials; and it provides a print marketplace for advertisers and prospective customers.

The newspaper is a private business that operates as a public institution. To continue publishing, it must have a sufficient number of people who will buy it, and enough advertising to pay for all of the expenses and make a profit for the owners. Usually, less than one-third of the money that a newspaper earns comes from the sale of the newspaper. Two-thirds of this money comes from the sale of advertising. The amount of advertising, however, and the price at which advertising can be sold depend on the number of people who buy the newspaper. Advertisers use newspaper space to sell their products; they will pay more for space in a newspaper read by a great many people than for space in one which has only a few readers.

Newspapers try to gain new readers in the same manner as a manufacturer tries to gain new buyers for his products. Like a product that is sold in a store, a



#### Read This!

Newspapers:

- **inform** readers through news articles
- **entertain** through feature stories, humor columns, comics, puzzles, and more
- **interpret and persuade** through editorials and opinion columns
- **serve** through ads and other information that helps readers with business, recreation and daily living



newspaper is often new and timely, has a pleasing appearance and tries to please the person who buys it.

Newspapers vary in terms of *circulation*. Circulation is the total number of copies of a newspaper distributed to subscribers and vendors in one day. Some newspapers are nationally published and have a large circulation; some are published locally with a small circulation.



### Read This!

A newspaper is a printed periodical whose purpose is to deliver news and other information in an up-to-date, factual manner. Newspapers appear most commonly in daily editions, but may also be issued twice a day or weekly. While the content of a newspaper varies, it generally consists of a predetermined combination of news, opinion, and advertising. The editorial section is written by reporters and other journalists at the direction of editors and may also be compiled from wire service reports. The advertising content of a newspaper can be divided into two parts, classified and display. Classified ads are small, text-only items obtained via telephone and set into the format by the classified advertising representative. Display ads are obtained by sales representatives employed by the newspaper who actively solicit local businesses for this larger, more visually oriented ad space.

Newspapers publish with varying frequency. Some newspapers come out twice a week, once a week, once a month, four times a year, or even less often. However, most newspapers are dailies, i.e. they publish every day.

All the copies of a newspaper published in a single day are referred to as that day's *issue*. For example, the newspaper copies published on June 24 are referred to as June 24th's issue. Furthermore, in a single day, a newspaper may be published more than once, e.g. once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The total number of copies published for a specific time of the day is referred to as that time's *edition*, e.g. "Morning Edition", or "Evening Edition". Daily newspapers print at least one edition every weekday. Morning editions, printed in the predawn hours, cover newsworthy events of the previous day. Evening editions are printed in the afternoon and include information about events that happened earlier that day. Most dailies also offer a larger weekend edition. In Western countries, weekend editions generally come out on Saturdays or Sundays. In Iran, weekend editions often come out on Thursdays.

Furthermore, many large daily newspapers publish regional editions that cater to the population of a smaller geographical

area. For example, each weekday the American newspaper *Wall Street Journal* publishes five different editions – three national regional editions, an edition in Europe, and an edition in Asia. Dailies in very large cities may publish a *city* edition as well as *suburban* editions to circulate among readers who live outside the city. Dailies in large urban areas also may

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publish two or more city editions, each delivering news and advertisements directed at different districts or neighborhoods.

Newspapers differ in focus or content. *General-circulation* newspapers print news (and other materials) of interest to a broad audience, while *special-interest* newspapers target a more specific audience, e.g. the medical or business community. They cover daily events from the perspective of members in that group. The American newspaper *Wall Street Journal*, for example, contains detailed financial news that appeals to members of the business community.

Newspapers differ widely in format, features and style. No two are exactly the same. Some papers will have items that others omit. They vary in section sequence and type. One may have a *Business Section* while another calls it the *Financial Section*. Some papers may put the editorial article on the first page, others on the inside pages.

### **Newspaper Office**

A newspaper office consists of several departments. The most important of these is the *editorial* department. It is the department that writes news stories on events, or edits the news the newspaper has gathered through its reporters or from wire services, and provides pictures or drawings that will be published in the newspaper. It also writes opinion articles on the news known as editorials. Usually the editorial department consists of the editor in chief, publisher and other top journalists.



Every afternoon, Washington Post editors meet to discuss what stories should be printed on the next day's front page



Washington Post Newsroom

There are other departments such as *advertising* and *distribution* departments. The advertising department makes decisions on the ads to be published in the newspaper and places ads on the pages of the newspaper. The distribution department is responsible for delivering the newspaper to the reader, either at his home or at a store or at a special outdoor place where all newspapers are sold. All the departments work under the supervision of the owner(s) of the newspaper, who establish the policies of the newspaper and see that the other departments are working properly.

## How Is News Produced?

News production is a staged process in which several people are involved. The first stage starts with the journalist/reporter. Using many input sources, the journalist/reporter produces a story on an event (each news article covering an event is called a news story). He gathers up scattered pieces of information and weaves them into one text, i.e. the news story. The story produced then goes to the editors and undergoes *editing*. Editing allows an independent expert to assess the content and style and spot the problems the journalist/reporter may have missed. The editors' profession is cutting and modifying the story. To improve the story and increase its news value, the editors may make some changes in the text of the story. For example, they may delete some information as superfluous, add some (background) information, substitute some words for others, change the grammatical structure of some sentences, and so on. The final text then goes to a second group of editors. They are responsible for the prominence the story receives in the newspaper and how it is displayed. This group of editors write headlines for news stories, decide on the visual means and devices used in the newspaper, provide



### Read This!

The editorial process of producing a daily edition of a large city newspaper begins with a meeting of the paper's editors, who determine the amount of editorial copy in an issue based on the advertising space that has already been sold. A specific number of pages is agreed upon, and the editorial assignments are made to the various departments. The section of national and international news, generally the first part of the paper, is compiled from correspondents who send in their stories electronically, usually via computer modern, to their editor's computer. There, the editor checks the stories, sometimes rewriting them or increasing or decreasing their length. Additional stories of importance are compiled from wire services such as United Press International, Associated Press, and Reuters. These are organizations that employ reporters in various cities of the globe to compile stories and items quickly for dissemination over telephone wires.

captions to the photographs, determine the layout of the newspaper pages and the position of news stories and other items on those pages, select the proper style and size of typeface, and so on.

All news stories, once written, are edited and put in special places in the newspaper. Whether they are published, the length, the prominence, the position on the page, and whether or not pictures appear with them will depend on their importance compared with other news stories to be printed the same day.



### Read This!

The articles prepared by the newspapers' reporters or journalists go to the *sub-editors* who are responsible for final checks, cutting the articles to the right size and writing captions and headlines. Sub-editors compile the pages of the newspaper using their computers. They collate the stories and the photos and place them on pages around the ads.

Sub-editors make decisions about:

- The content of each page
- The content of each story
- The position and size of any graphics
- The size and position of headlines
- The space devoted to each story
- The fonts and types sizes to be used
- The position and layout of each story
- The headlines for each story

## How Do Newspapers Present News?

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Newspapers present news through three kinds of codes: *linguistic*, *typographic*, and *graphic* (code here refers to any kind of system which may be employed for communication). The linguistic code refers to the linguistic signs, i.e. words, phrases, sentences used to convey the meaning, both denotative and connotative, of news stories to the reader. The typographic code refers to typographic devices such as the size and type of font or style of letters (bold, italic, italic bold) used in printing news stories, and the graphic code is meant here to be the photographs, paintings, charts, graphs, etc. which accompany news stories. Given the fact that a growing amount of space is being given to visual images in newspapers, the graphic code needs a little elaboration here.

A photo is a medium of recording reality and there are some features affecting the meaning conveyed by it. These include: *photo position* and *size*, *camera angle of view*, *gaze direction* and *facial expression*, and *lighting*. Each of these features communicates a different meaning and elicits a different response from the reader.

The shot size used in a photo is one of the most obvious factors affecting the meaning of the image. Basically, the size of a photo ranges from a *close-up* (a shot that shows a character's face in great detail so that it fills the screen or the frame) to a *long shot* (showing all or most of a fairly large subject, e.g. a person, and usually much of the surroundings). The closer a shot is to an object or a person, the more intimate the viewer/reader is to the object or the person and the more private the view.



A close-up



A long shot

The angle of the shot also conveys specific meanings to the viewer. The alternatives here are: *high angle* (looking down on a person from above) is interpreted as making that person look small, insignificant, unlikely to win, vulnerable, helpless (connoting weakness); *low angle* (looking at a person from a position lower than the person) is interpreted to make that person look powerful, superior, important, likely to win, and in control (connoting power and authority); and *eye-level angle* (looking at a person from a position on the same level with the person, neither higher nor lower) is interpreted to connote equality.

Gaze directions and facial expressions of people in photos carry specific connotations. It makes a difference whether the person in the photo is looking in the camera and smiling or looking away from the camera with a reflective pose. Pictures can make a person, a group, or a political party look

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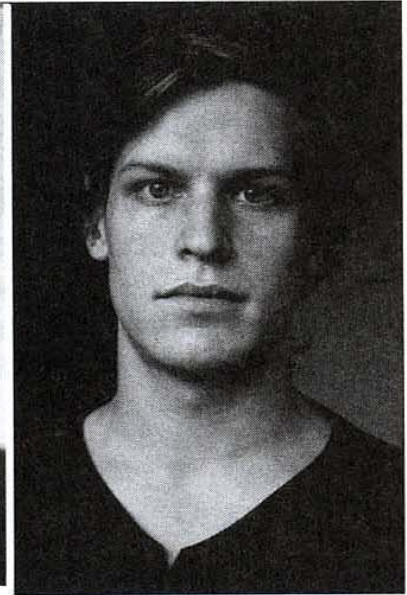
good, bad, selfish, silly, cruel etc. Which photos a newspaper chooses to use can heavily influence the public's perception of a person or event.



A high view angle



A low angle of view



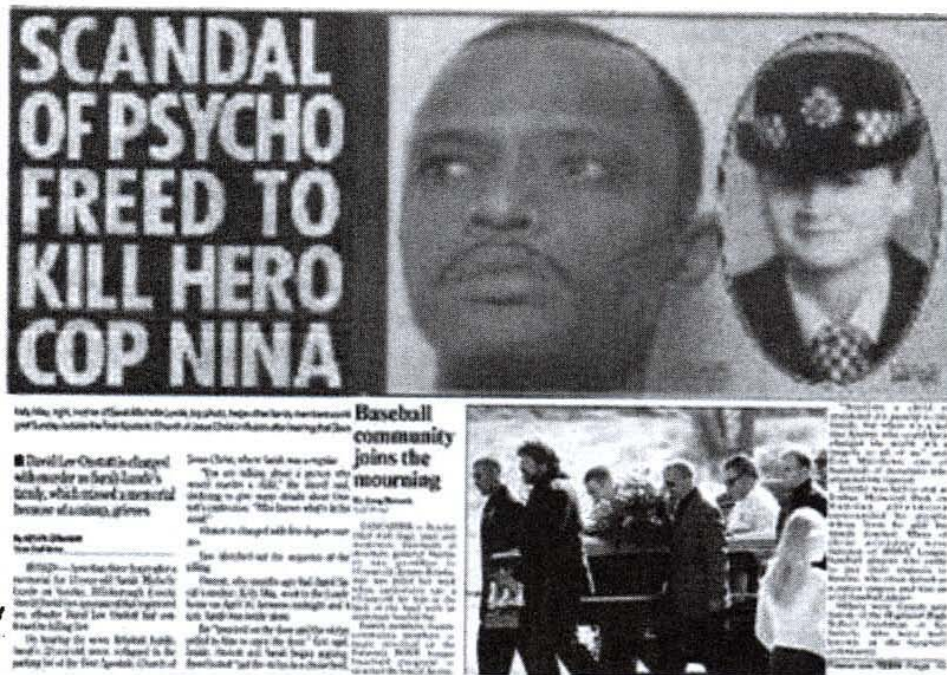
An eye level view



Gaze directions and facial expressions

Light affects the mood and atmosphere of the photograph. Bright connotes happiness but dark connotes somberness; high contrast of black and white is theatrical and dramatic, but low contrast is realistic.

To elaborate on the issue, we choose two news stories and analyze the three codes used in presenting the stories. The first story is on the murder of a policewoman by a criminal. As regards the typographic code, the story starts with a headline, which has been printed in big-sized typeface to attract the readers' attention to the topic of the story. Bold and big-sized subheadings are also employed to break up the text of the story and direct the reader in making meaning of the text as well as to make clear the points that the newspaper thinks to be of particular significance to the understanding of the news story.



As for the linguistic code, the story begins with a headline reading "SCANDAL OF PSYCHO FREED TO KILL HERO COP NINA." The headline provides a framework on which to build the meaning of the news story. The story uses orally based vocabulary as well as dramatic and sensational language. This can be seen in the first sentence of the news story which reads "A violent cop-hating nut killed brave WPC Nina Mackey after a catastrophic catalogue by Crown prosecutors and police allowed him to roam free." The story also employs alliteration for emphasis as in "catastrophic catalogue" and "scandal of psycho." The colloquial vocabulary items (e.g. cop) used in the story connote familiarity and informality. The story implies familiarity with the victim (Nina Mackey), who is



Read this too

## **The Front Page**

A newspaper's front page serves as a window through which the reader can peek into the newspaper and get a glimpse of the features and items contained in its pages. The front page is like the cover of a magazine and often helps sell the paper at the newsstand.

The first page of a newspaper includes the title, all the publication information, the index, and the main stories that will capture the most attention. The major story of the day will be placed in the most prominent position and contain a large, bold-faced headline. The topic could be of a national scope or it could be a local story.

The main feature story receives the boldest headline of the front page as well as the entire newspaper. Other featured stories begin on page one and are often continued elsewhere in the first section (approximately the first twenty pages). However, these articles can be continued in sections other than the first.



# The Daily Telegraph

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## British al-Qaeda hub 'is biggest in West'

By **Con Coughlin** and **James Kirkup**

BRITAIN has the greatest number of Islamic extremists linked to al-Qaeda of any Western country and poses a grave risk to international security, the US government believes.

Terrorist groups are using this country as a base to plot attacks around the world, say officials.

American leaders believe the Government is failing to combat the threat of extremism among Muslims living in Britain.

"The UK has the greatest concentration of active al-Qaeda supporters of any Western country," a senior US official told the *Los Angeles Times*.

"As a result, no Western country has been more threatened from the UK than the US-based al-Qaeda network poses a threat not only to Britain but to the rest of the world."

The disclosure of American fears will increase transatlantic tensions over the attempted terrorist attack on an airliner above Detroit last month.

Clair Feroz, an al-Qaeda operative, has said his attack was inspired and directed by al-Qaeda.

It has been claimed he was radicalised in London, where the Nigerian was a student between 2005 and 2008. British officials insist that he became a terrorist in Pakistan.

American officials believe European Muslims are more likely than their counterparts in the United States to subscribe to extremist doctrines.

The US prides itself on "assimilating" all immigrant groups into mainstream culture, while European nations including Britain have pursued a policy of multiculturalism. Critics say it leaves Muslims at risk of being alienated from western society and susceptible to radical movements.

"The level of al-Qaeda activity in Britain is becoming a major source of concern," said a senior State Department official. The organisation's ability to use Britain as a base to plot terror attacks constitutes a serious threat to the security of Britain and other Western countries.

The failed Detroit attack has raised attention on Britain's record on dealing with international terrorism.

Abdullah's attack was the third al-Qaeda attempt to bring down a US-bound plane but could be linked to London. In 2001, Richard Reid from London, tried to explode a bomb hidden in his shoe on a flight to Miami and in 2006 a plot to blow up seven jet liners for America from Heathrow using homemade liquid bombs was foiled.

Setting some US politicians and security experts, the British capital has been dubbed "Londonistan" because of the presence of so many radical Muslims and mosques with connections to extremist preachers.

British universities are a particular concern. Abdullah was president of the Muslim Students Society at the time.

Continued on Page 2



Smiled a smile of recognition lights up the face of 6-year-old Radwan Houston Claude as he is reunited with his mother.

## A moment of joy amid the despair



Tom Leonard reports from Haiti: a shattered nation with a people close to breaking point

Haiti was ravaged in dirt, hail and rain and had been buried in the rubble of his collapsed home for two and a half days. But two-year-old Radwan Houston Claude could still manage a smile as he was reunited with his mother.

Sadly, his delight and that of Captain Platin as she took her son from his Spanish rescuer was a rare moment of joy in this besieged city. Yesterday, three days after an

earthquake devastated the Haitian capital, killing at least 30,000 and probably many more, Port-au-Prince resembled a medieval city gripped by the plague.

The bodies lay piled up in their thousands on alleys and side streets, while many survivors slept out in squares and parks under a sea of blue and white tarpaulins.

Haitians, famously forbidding despite their country's crushing poverty and history of cultural disasters, were living in peace with the pervasive indifference of the world.

The street gangs roving the city's wealthy districts were mostly unknown protesters who had crossed dead bodies into major streets where they could not be hidden from view. They had represented a minority, but in this city's

central Champ de Mars park, there was no meeting for tension and frustration among a population that had seen more to nothing of the largesse promised by America and the rest of the world.

Louis, confronted with a weary wave out to sea that there were no American ships in the harbour, no marines in the streets and the local airport was even turning back foreign search-and-rescue teams. As a thousand-strong crowd gathered expectantly but in vain around three Red Cross vehicles packed outside the shattered presidential palace, there was no shortage of angry voices.

"It's a big scandal, we feel abandoned," said Jean-Claude Holliver, 34, his voice rising passionately as dozens of countrymen crowded around him to hear his words. "We haven't seen any

water or food. It's been four days now and nobody has come yet - you know that. Now we want to know why."

He fell particularly let down by Barack Obama. "I'm very angry with him. We were the first black people who put a mark on liberty," he said, referring to Haiti's successful revolt against slavery. "We now need help from the first black US president."

Across the road was one of the best sites in which, he said, "people are lying on the ground screaming for help". In fact, many of the injured seemed too weak even to do that. The smell of excrement and uncollected rubbish is a constant presence in the city but was almost inexpressible around the bodies of the dead.

Continued on Page 2

Reports: Pages 20-21

## The 50p tax rate should be short-lived says Mandelson

By **Brian Winnett** and **Mary Riddell**

LORD Mandelson says the new 50p higher rate of tax should be scrapped as soon as possible.

In an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform said the rate would be scrapped as soon as possible.

"Personally, I would favour, when financial circumstances permit, for the rate to be scrapped as soon as possible," he said.

The Government will introduce a 50p rate of tax for those earning more than £250,000. Alistair Darling, the Chancellor, said it could be in place for many years.

In a speech today in a conference of the Fabian Society, a Labouring think-tank, Mr Brown will say that encouraging "mobility" will be a key part of his government's economic strategy.

Mr Brown said the government will provide the "right" mix of incentives to encourage people to move from one job to another.

The Chancellor said the government will provide the "right" mix of incentives to encourage people to move from one job to another.

View: Page 4



## New job for Sir Fred after RBS debacle

By **Christopher Hope** and **Phil Aldrick**

SIR Fred Goodwin, the former chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland, whose £70,000 annual pension came to a symbolic reward for failure, has taken his first job since leaving the bank after its near-collapse 18 months ago.

The 52-year-old has joined RBS as an adviser.

RBS is 84 per cent of its former value after being bailed out with £20 billion of taxpayer money. His rehabilitation came as JP Morgan Chase, the US investment bank, said it would pay its 25,000 investment bankers \$2.5 billion (£1.5 billion) over the next three years.

than last year. The Treasury should raise between £250 million and £300 million for the UK exchange through the new "pension levies" on bonuses above £25,000.

The Treasury is understood to be considering a levy on the banks to fund its insurance scheme. The structure of the original would resemble President Barack Obama's "super-profits" tax on banks to raise \$100 billion and recover money US taxpayers are owed.

George Osborne, the shadow chancellor, said a Tory government would push for a global insurance levy on banks to help fund their revival in a future crisis.

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MARY PORTAS  
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MAGAZINE  
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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

TRAVEL  
HOLIDAY GUIDE TO FRANCE

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## Headline Vocabulary

English newspaper headlines use a very special vocabulary. Here is a list to give you a fast start in learning it. You have undoubtedly seen many of the words before, but when used in headlines they may carry meanings that are unfamiliar to you.

Word	Meaning	Example
accord	agreement	Accord Possible Today
aid	help	Man Aids Police
air	make known	TV Airs Facts On Arms Delivery
assail	criticize strongly	Soviets Assail Us On A-Tests
axe	dismiss from a job	Governor To Axe Aide?
back	support	Iran Backs Hizbollah
Balk	refuse to accept	Union Balks At Court Order
ban	prohibit	Arms Ban Lifted
bar	not allow	Club Bars Women
bid	attempt offer	Bid To Open Border Union Rejects Latest Bid
bilk	cheat	Clerk Bilks City of \$2b
blast (n.) (v.)	explosion; criticism criticize strongly	Tanker Blast Near Manila Bush Blasts Democrats
blaze	fire	Blaze Destroys Factory
blitz	drive	Charity Blitz Fails
boost	help; increase	Industry Gets Boost
cite	mention	Manager Cites Union For Shutdown
cool	uninterested	Russia Cool To Aid Offer
crusade	campaign	Crusade Against Corruption Fails

domestic affairs	امور / مسائل داخلی
foreign affairs	امور / مسائل خارجی
international affairs	مسائل بین المللی
agreement	توافق، موافقت نامه، پیمان
bilateral agreement	موافقت نامه دوجانبه
conclude an agreement	قرارداد بستن، قرارداد منعقد کردن
air space	حریم هوایی
be on full alert	در حالت آماده باش کامل بودن
put on full alert	به حالت آماده باش کامل درآوردن
ambassador	سفیر
embassy	سفارتخانه
amnesty	عفو(عمومی)، بخشودگی
grant amnesty to	مورد عفو قراردادن
Amnesty International	(سازمان) عضو بین الملل
approve/ ratify /endorse	تصویب کردن
approve a bill	لایحه ای را تصویب کردن
areas of agreement	موارد/ زمینه های مورد توافق
areas of disagreement	موارد اختلاف
armaments	تسلیحات، تجهیزات، جنگ افزار
arms	اسلحه، تسلیحات
arms race	مسابقه تسلیحاتی
arms trafficking	قاچاق اسلحه
lay down arms	از جنگ دست کشیدن، اسلحه را زمین گذاشتن
arrest	دستگیر کردن
be under house arrest	در خانه تحت بازداشت بودن
assassinate	ترور کردن
Islamic Consultative Assembly	مجلس شورای اسلامی
attaché	وابسته
military attaché	وابسته نظامی
cultural attaché	وابسته فرهنگی
authorities/ officials	مقامات
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