The Big Type

Getting it right

- Have a strategy.
- Use creative tactics.
- Know what to avoid.
The Four Graph Approach is based on the now-familiar results of Eye-Trac® research carried out by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.
1st Graph: The Picture

The 1st graph:
■ Captures interest.
■ Sets the tone.
■ Provides visual context.

Readers enter the page through the largest picture. It makes sense that this photo should serve some of the traditional roles of the first paragraph of a story. Ideally, the largest picture works as a unit with any other pictures.

The best pictures have what Harold Evans calls “relevant context” that immediately puts you at the scene.
2nd Graph: The Headline and Deck

The 2nd Graph:
- Introduces subject.
- Interacts with the pictures.
- Creates interest.
- Deck can serve as the “nut graph.”

Growing up, Eddie Guardado learned that you never back down, a credo he takes to the mound when he’s called to save a game.

Heart of a fighter

Just as the lead of a story can extend two or three paragraphs, the picture, head and deck should work together without repetition.

The hammer headline should capture the essence of the story in two to four words. The deck should capture the deeper character of the story. Neither should steal the writer’s thunder.
A good caption finds an interesting way to say the obvious. In a center-piece layout, the caption often isn’t timely, presenting an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to break out of the standard caption style, using a quote for instance. The challenge is to write a caption that doesn’t make the photo sound stale — or mislead the reader into thinking the photo is fresher than it is.
The 4th Graph: The Lead

The 4th Graph:
- Doesn’t have to dwell on the who, what, when, where, why and how; the first three “graphs” free the writer to be creative.
- With planning and teamwork, the writer will know how the story is being played and can write accordingly.
Big-type tactic: The Seed Approach

- Identify a word or idea that can be represented in the headline.
- Think of expressions inspired by that seed.
- Focus on those expressions that tell the story.

GULLANE, Scotland — The label “Ugly American” long has been applied to those from the United States who visit Great Britain and the rest of Europe and who arrive expecting everything to be like home.

You know, things like ice-cold beer, air conditioning, automatic transmissions, and bacon and eggs for breakfast.

If you’ve traveled across the Atlantic, you know that’s not always true. The beer often is served at room temperature. Windows in many hotel rooms open to allow “natural” air conditioning. Manual transmissions are the norm and much less expensive than automatics. And breakfast can be cold meats, cheeses and bread — but not toast.

Things are different in Europe, as they should be. But just try telling that to the Ugly American.

Fortunately, most American golfers who visit the shrines of the game in Scotland and Ireland understand that they are going for a unique experience, that seaside links courses are different from courses at home.

It’s not a distraction, it’s the attraction.

There aren’t many traditional Scottish-Irish seaside links courses in the United States. Among the few are Whistling Straits near Sheboygan, Wis., and Bandon Dunes in Oregon. (No, Pebble Beach Golf Links is not a true links course despite its name.)

In Minnesota, courses like StoneRidge and the Tournament Players Club of the Twin Cities have vestiges of links courses because of their bunkering or fescue grasses. But without a seaside and without sand dunes, we cannot have a true links course.

Of the world’s 40,000-plus golf courses, fewer than 200 are genuine links courses, those built on sand dunes that were unusable for farming or industry. It’s called “links golf” because the game is played on the sand dunes that link the sea to the land.

Seaside links courses, of course, are quite different from typical American park-
The seed can come from the story or the picture. The editor must see the picture and know how it will play in the design.
The end result plays off a popular catch phrase, but note that it clearly relates to the story.

The deck takes pressure off the hammer head by summarizing the story.
MANKATO, Minn. — Mike Tice’s day starts with a banana. It usually does.

His night ends with a cigar. It always does.

For the new Vikings coach, training camp is a fire drill of activities, chores and commitments that must be crammed into a 24-hour day. Amid the chaos, Tice tries to fit in football, and if he’s lucky, a couple of hours of sleep.

It’s 7:15 Wednesday, and a handful of younger Vikings quietly watch cartoons on a large-screen television in the players lounges as teammates trickle down from their dorm rooms for breakfast.

On this rare occasion, their coach isn’t one of the first ones down. For the first time in camp, for the first time since a family vacation in June, 7 a.m. arrives with Tice still in bed.

This morning is a bit unusual for training camp. The Vikings will have a one-hour special-teams practice at 10:30. The players will have much of the day to themselves.
When the picture provides the seed, as in this case, the caption becomes extra important in helping to connect the dots.
Seed Approach works with some news stories

When it comes to headline writing, stories are of three kinds:

- Those that must be played straight.
- Those that demand a clever headline.
- Those that could go either way.

In those that could go either way, the deck can restore a more serious tone after the hammer or main headline.
Seriousness doesn’t always rule out cleverness.

Use the seed approach to make a bold statement.
Be careful here!
Take a few minutes and think up a hammer head to go with this story and picture, but make sure you use good taste!

The other day, Billy Klinke greeted his 8-year-old niece, Carly, with a hug. He had to reach up to wrap his arms around her. She’s taller than he is. Most people, including a lot of kids, tower over Klinke.

He’s a grown-up who never did much growing. Born with a genetic disorder that no amount of vitamins, growth hormones or stretching exercises could overcome, Klinke grew to 4 feet 3 and that was it. About the only thing stunted in his life has been his height. He hasn’t let size matter.

MANKATO, Minn. As a child, he played basketball and football. In high school, he wrestled and was a gymnast. In adulthood, he defied the horse trainers and owners who said he was too tiny to be a jockey. Imagine that, being told you’re too small to be a jockey.

They looked at this little man who’ll proudly tell you he’s a dwarf and they said he wouldn’t be able to hold the reins and his feet wouldn’t reach into the stirrups.

He showed ‘em. Always the smallest jockey in every race, he won more than a thousand times over a 15-year career.

BOB SANSEVERE, 6B
Know when to fold ’em

■ A major error is to use inappropriate humor in today’s sensitive world.

■ And really, something more humorous wouldn’t lend the right tone for the story.

A super-sized heart

Billy Klinke stands only 4 feet 3, but Vikings coach Mike Tice realized long ago that something powerful was ticking inside his small friend.

As a child, he played basketball and football. In high school, he wrestled and was a gymnast. In adulthood, he defied the odds, building his small frame into a body that, being told you’re too small to be a jockey,

They looked at this little man with great disparity for what he had to do. He said that he’d never be able to hold the weight and he wasn’t even strong enough to hold the weight of the weight. He showed his strength.

Always the smallest, he decided to go for every race, he was more than a thousand turns over a 10-year career.
Know when to fold ’em

- Another place to use caution is the double entendre.
- Know what’s allowable at your paper.
- The rule: Never write a headline that the biggest jerk in town can use against you.
Now try this:

- Write a head and deck for a special section on the PGA Championship.
- Rich Beem, a relative unknown, beat out a hard-charging Tiger Woods.
- Inside stories include a feature on Beem and a “game story.” The overall theme is that this is the first time an opponent hasn’t folded before a Woods charge.
Know when to fold ’em

■ When a clever idea comes too easily, beware of the cliché.

■ We want to write the clichés of tomorrow.

■ Puns on names are rarely fresh.
In the end, the best big type tells the story