Find the first **independent clause** in the story and list the **simple subject**, **simple predicate** and **direct object**. In other words:

**WHO**  ________________

**did**  **WHAT**  ________________

**to**  **WHOM**  ________________  ?

**WHERE**  was it done?  ________________  ?

Now look for **dependent clauses** and **participial phrases**.

A participial phrase might tell you  **WHY**
you care about the  **verb**:

(A *car bomb exploded in Beirut today, killing a former prime minister.*)

A **relative clause** often tells  **WHY**
you care about the  **subject** or  **object**:

(*The man who performed the world’s first heart transplant died today.*)
REMEMBER: If your headline’s verb comes from a relative clause, you have the wrong headline:

*Man performs heart transplant*  
– vs. –  
*Heart transplant pioneer dies*

Which noun is more important to your story:

**SUBJECT** (think active voice)  
or **OBJECT** (think passive voice)?

Can you omit any grammatical steps?

```
Smith    files    a lawsuit    against Jones  
subj   verb    direct object   indirect object

Smith    sues    Jones  
subj   verb    direct object

A man who was charged in last week’s robbery  
subj   relative clause   prepositional phrase

A suspect in last week’s robbery  
subj   prepositional phrase
```