Headline English

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each compact headline verb with its meaning.

1 axe	____	a investigate
2 back	____	b promise firmly
3 ban	____	c support
4 bid	____	d attempt or offer
5 boost	____	e reduce or control
6 curb	____	f cancel or remove
7 probe	____	g increase or improve
8 vow	____	h officially forbid

2 Complete the headline collocations.

axe | **back** | **ban** | **bid** | **boost** | **curb** | **probe** | **vow**

1 council to _____ old plan

2 leaders _____ peace proposal

3 city announces smoking _____

4 company makes takeover _____

5 tax cuts may _____ spending

6 new measures to _____ pollution

7 police launch fraud _____

8 minister makes reform _____

3 Choose the accurate expansion of the headline.

1 *Council Axes Parking Plan*: *The council has cancelled the plan / The council has repaired it*.

2 *Doctors Back New Rules*: *Doctors support the rules / Doctors postpone them*.

3 *City Bans Street Fires*: *The city prohibits fires / The city starts fires*.

4 *Firm in Bid for Rival*: *A company is trying to buy a rival / A rival closed the company*.

5 *Tourism Boosts Jobs*: *Tourism increases employment / Tourism investigates jobs*.

6 *Measures Curb Waste*: *The measures reduce waste / The measures produce waste*.

7 *Police Probe Data Leak*: *Police are investigating it / Police have approved it*.

8 *Mayor Vows Action*: *The mayor promises action / The mayor refuses to act*.

4 Complete the news digest with words from the box.

axes | **backs** | **bans** | **bid** | **boost** | **curb** | **probe** | **vows**

Today's digest: The council **1** _____ a costly road scheme but **2** _____ a new rail link. A proposed city-centre **3** _____ would restrict private cars. Retailers hope the change will **4** _____ local trade. New rules aim to **5** _____ air pollution. Meanwhile, regulators have opened a safety **6** _____. A technology firm has made a **7** _____ for a smaller rival, and its director **8** _____ to protect jobs.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Small words, strong effects

Headline vocabulary favours short verbs such as axe, vow and probe because they save space and create energy. These words are not neutral substitutes in every context. Axe sounds more sudden and dramatic than cancel, while vow suggests a solemn commitment rather than an ordinary plan. Readers must expand both the grammar and the connotations. A compact word can make a routine decision appear like a crisis.

1 Why do headlines favour short verbs? _____

2 Name three examples from the text. _____

3 Are headline verbs always neutral substitutes? _____

4 What does axe suggest? _____

5 How is vow stronger than plan? _____

6 What can compact vocabulary do to routine news? _____

6 Rewrite as a neutral full sentence.

1 Government Axes Scheme _____

2 Scientists Back Proposal _____

3 Police Probe Missing Funds _____

4 Minister Vows Rapid Reform _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **100-120 word** news brief with a headline. Then add a second, more neutral headline for the same facts.

[ ] Use headline grammar accurately. [ ] Control connotation. [ ] Keep both headlines factually equivalent.

ANSWER KEY

1 Compact headline verbs

1 **f** 2 **c** 3 **h** 4 **d** 5 **g** 6 **e** 7 **a** 8 **b**

2 Headline collocations

1 **axe** 2 **back** 3 **ban** 4 **bid** 5 **boost** 6 **curb** 7 **probe** 8 **vow**

3 Accurate expansions

1 **cancelled** 2 **support** 3 **prohibits** 4 **trying to buy**
5 **increases employment** 6 **reduce waste** 7 **investigating** 8 **promises action**

4 News digest

1 **axes** 2 **backs** 3 **ban** 4 **boost** 5 **curb** 6 **probe** 7 **bid** 8 **vows**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 They save space and create energy. 2 Axe, vow, probe. 3 No. 4 Sudden, dramatic cancellation.
5 It suggests solemn commitment. 6 Make it appear like a crisis.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The government has **cancelled the scheme**. 2 Scientists **support the proposal**. 3 Police are **investigating missing funds**. 4 The minister has **promised rapid reform**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check equivalence, connotation and factual restraint.