

Types of story leads



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Lead Every news story begins with an introduction called the lead. This may be a single word, a phrase, a clause, a brief sentence, an entire paragraph or a series of paragraphs. The main functions of the lead, aside from introducing the news story, are to tell the story in capsule form and to answer right away the questions the reader would naturally ask. A good lead answers all the important questions of the reader, indicates the attendant circumstances if they are all important, and arouses the readers' interest to continue reading the story.

The lead is the beginning, the most important structural element of a story. Charnley (1966) stated that, " an effective lead is a brief, sharp statement of the story's essential facts. " The lead is usually the first sentence, or in some cases the first two sentences, and is ideally 20-25 words in length. Leads should: * open with bright, interesting, colorful nouns and verbs be brief (often only 20-30 words) be, for the most part, one sentence in length be crisp and to the point effectively summarize the story " feature the feature" include attribution (the source) if needed for credibility give the title for any person mentioned not include personal pronouns such as " we" and " you" not include reporter opinion Summary lead The typical lead is called a summary lead or straight summary lead, and it, of course, summarizes the story. The journalist must, therefore, write a clear, fairly short sentence that reveals all, telling the end result of the story. Someone should be able to read the lead and be informed about what happened without reading the rest of the story. A summary lead should answer as many of the 5W's and H as possible: who, what, when, where, why and how.

The 5 W's and H provide the news writer with quick and convenient means of organizing the lead of a story. They also provide the framework or structure for organizing the lead of a story. This is one of the most common forms of hard news story. But, the question is that how do we decide what is most important and what should follow in descending order of importance? Here, we must use our own judgment. Some questions to ask: What will affect the readers the most? What questions does the lead raise that need to be answered immediately? What supporting quotes are strongest?

Below are examples of leads which feature the various 5W's & H. The words that make up the " W" that is featured are in bold face type. | WHO lead Used when the person involved is more prominent than what he does or what happens to him. -Reckless drivers who don't seem to be drunk may well be high on cocaine or marijuana, according to roadside tests that indicate drugs may rival alcohol as a hazard on the highway. -Monica Lewinsky, the former low-level aide at the center of the current White House investigation, is willing to submit to a polygraph examination in exchange for complete immunity from prosecution, her lawyer said Sunday.

WHAT lead Used when the event or what took place is more important than the person involved in the story. -A pack of wild monkeys terrorized a seaside resort town south of Tokyo last week, attacking 30 people and sending eight of them to the hospital with bites. (This also co-features the who.) -A Soyuz spacecraft docked flawlessly with the Mir space station Saturday, bringing a fresh crew of two Russian cosmonauts and a Frenchman to the orbiting outpost -- along with a bottle of French wine. WHY lead Used when the reason is more prominent or unique than what happens. With more

amateurs cutting wood for use as an alternative to high-priced heating oil, hospitals are coping with an increasing number of injuries due to chain-saw accidents, reported the American College of Surgeons. WHERE lead Used when the place is unique and no prominent person is involved. -Red China will be the site of the next International Film Festival. WHEN lead Rarely used as the reader presumes the story to be timely. However, this lead is useful when speaking of deadlines, holidays and important dates. -Today, almost to the hour, the Revolutionary Government was proclaimed by President Corazon Aquino.

HOW lead Used when the manner, mode, means, or method of achieving the story is unnatural way. -Louisiana-Pacific Corp. plans to sell seven out-of-state lumber mills and expand production at 17 others in order to boost output by up to 40 percent. (The how in this lead is also the what.) Novelty leads Novelty leads differ from summary leads in that they make no attempt to answer all of the five Ws and the H. As the name implies novelty leads are novel. They use different writing approaches to present different news situations to attract the reader's attention and arouse curiosity.

Type of Novelty Lead| Example| CONTRAST: The contrast lead compares two opposite extremes, generally dramatize a story. The comparisons most frequently used are tragedy with comedy, age with youth, the past with the present and the beautiful with the ugly. | In 1914, the United States entered the First World War with a Navy of 4, 376 officers, 68, 680 men, 54 airplanes, one airship, three balloons and one air station. Today, there are more than 500, 000 active duty officers and enlisted personnel, 475 ships and 8, 260 aircraft in our Navy. PICTURE: The picture lead draws a vivid word of the

person or thing in the story. It allows the reader to see the person or thing as you saw it. | Thin and unshaven, his clothes drooping from his body like rags on a scarecrow, Frank Brown, USN, today told naval authorities about six-week ordeal in an open rubber boat in the South China Sea. The new principal, although only at his early thirties, is already silver-haired. He seldom talks, but when he does, he talks with sense. | FREAK: The freak lead is the most novel of the novelty leads.

As the name implies, the freak lead employs a play on words, alliteration, poetry or an unusual typographical arrangement to introduce the facts in the story and to attract the reader's attention. | For sale: One guided missile destroyer. The Navy is thinking about inserting this advertisement. ... \$ammy \$mith, who i\$ just \$even, wa\$ digging in the \$and at \$amsons beach today and gue\$\$ what he found? | BACKGROUND: The background lead is similar to a picture lead, except for one important difference. It draws a vivid word picture of the news setting, surroundings or circumstances. High seas, strong winds and heavy overcast provided the setting for a dramatic mission of mercy in the North Atlantic on the first day of the new year. The PNC campus was turned into a miniature carnival ground Sept. 1 during the 85th F-Day celebration of the College. Decorated with buntings and multi-colored lights, the college quadrangle was a grand setting for a barrio fiesta. | PUNCH: The punch lead consists of a blunt, explosive statement designed to surprise or jolt the reader. | The president is dead. Friday the 13th is over, but the casualty list is still growing.

Victory Day! Magsaysay High School celebrated March 18 its 5th victory in the city-wide journalism contests. | QUESTION: The question lead features a

pertinent query that arouses the readers' curiosity and makes them want to read the body of the story for answers. Phrase this lead as a rhetorical question. | How does pay in the Navy compare with civilian wages? Has the space age affected the role of the Navy? | QUOTATION: The quotation lead features a short, eye catching quote or remark, usually set in quotation marks.

A quote lead should be used only when it is so important or remarkable that it overshadows the other facts in the story. | " You really don't know what freedom is until you have had to escape from Communist captivity, " says Bob Denglar, a former Navy lieutenant and an escapee from a Viet Cong prison camp. " The youth in the New Republic have become partners of the government in its struggle for progress and advancement," thus spoke PNC Dean of Instruction Rebecca D. Alcantara to some 400 student delegates to the 1998 Hi-Y-H-teensLeadershipTraining Seminar held Dec. 6-39 at the College Auditorium. | DIRECT ADDRESS: The direct address lead is aimed directly at the readers and makes them collaborators with facts in the story. It usually employs the pronouns " you" and " your. " | Your pay will increase by ten percent next month. You can receive a collegeeducationNavy expense if you qualify under a new program announced this week. | References : <http://journalism20.nuvvo.com/lesson/7587-lead-of-a-news-story> www.angelfire.com <http://photographytraining.tpub.com>