

THE LEAD

LEAD

Lead is an opening paragraph that gives the audience/reader the most important information of the news story in a concise and clear manner.

Writing a lead

- Before writing a lead, you need to ask the fundamental questions of news writing; *who, what, when, where, why and how.*
- **Keep it simple;** the best lead is one that is concise and clear. Think about your story and then write a simple but powerful to reflect it. Don't bog your reader down with overly complicated language or extra words. You must be clear and concise
- **Don't bury your lead;** your lead is your hook (The thing that makes the reader interested in your story). If you bury it, then their interest might be buried along with it. They shouldn't have to ask themselves what the story is about, you should be telling them upfront
- **The ABCs of Journalism;** Remember your ABCs which are Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity. Through these should be incorporated throughout your news story/article, they are especially important in the lead

TYPES OF LEAD

Summary Lead

This is the most common and traditional lead in Journalism. It is meant to give quick summary of the story in as few words as possible (Should be 30 words or less), usually in one sentence. It contains most but not necessarily all of the 5Ws and H

Example; *Two children at play were killed today when a sports car jumped the curb outside Prospect Park and ran them down. Twelve in the group were injured*

Example 2; *President Kennedy was slain by an assassin today in a burst of gunfire in downtown Dallas.*

Example 3: *President Samia Suluhu Hassan has sworn in three ambassadors today at the occasion held at state house in Dodoma*

Single-Item Lead

This lead focuses on just one or two elements of a summary lead. The purpose is to pack a bigger punch than a summary lead. For instance, when the Philadelphia Phillies won the 2008 World Series, their first Championship since 1980, a story began with this Single-Item lead: ***The Philadelphia Phillies are World Champions again.***

As opposed to this typical summary lead, which Reuters used: *The Philadelphia Phillies ended their long wait for a World Series title with a short burst of baseball last night as they clinched the crown by completing a rain-suspended 4-3 win over the Tampa Bay Rays*

Delayed Identification Lead

The 'who' is not identified right away in this lead because it isn't deemed as important (For example, a member on the school board punched the president). Instead a descriptive pronoun is used to describe the person and his title and specific name is revealed in a later paragraphs

Example 1: *The increasingly rate of WiFi users has said to be a root cause to the current distances of the service at DSJ, ICT Officer revealed*

Example 2: *Mwanaume mmoja mkazi wa Mbagala Makuka jijini Dar es Salaam anatumia kumnyonga hadi kufa mke wake hapo jana majira ya saa mbili na nusu usiku kwa kile kinachodaiwa ni kutokana na wivu wa mapenzi*

Aiyola Shamte (28), ambaye ni mke wa mtuhumiwa huyo anayetambulika kwa jina la Shabani Kilunda (36) anadaiwa kufanyiwa kitendo hicho cha kikatili mara baada ya kurudi nyumbani akitokea katika mihangaiko yake ya biashara ya matunda na mbogamboga

Creative Lead

Unless you're writing hard news for a daily newspaper or regularly-updated website, the summary lead just doesn't reel in readers. You need to take a more creative approach. Consider this summary lead:

A late spring snowstorm surprised forecasters and drivers Tuesday afternoon, triggering more than 30 accidents, Cleveland police officials said.

Short Sentence Lead

This lead uses one word or a short phrase as a teaser for the rest of the lead. Readers may find this gimmicky, so use this approach sparingly. Here's an example:

One-fifth of an inch that's all the snow it took to trigger more than 30 accidents on local roads yesterday as a late spring storm snuck up on Cleveland motorists.

Analogy Lead

This lead makes a comparison between an issue or event you're writing about and something more familiar to the average reader. This approach can work well when you have a complex or foreign matter you want to explain in laymen's terms. Consider:

AMSTERDAM -- The Netherlands is considering anti-terrorism laws that make the United States' Patriot Act look like a civil libertarian's dream come true.

Scenic Lead

This lead begins with a description of the scene surrounding an event. It is typically used for stories in which the setting is prominent, such as stories about festive events,

performances and sports. It can also be used to strike a mood appropriate for the story.
See below

The lights shine down and the music surrounds her as she spins across the stage into the arms of her partner. The audience roars its approval as the music slows and the curtains begin to close. It's the end of just another workday for teenager Chelsea Rittenhouse. At 18, the Howell resident is the youngest member of the New York Theater Ballet, which describes itself as the most widely seen chamber ballet company in the United States. The professional group also tours abroad.

Storytelling Lead

Using a narrative style, begin by introducing the main characters, the conflict, and perhaps the setting of the story. Make readers feel the drama and want to know what's going to happen next.

Wall Street Journal reporter Angelo Henderson used this approach to begin his Pulitzer Prize-winning article about a pharmacist who is driven to violence by his encounters with armed robbery: See below

"Get on the ground," a man holding a gun screamed. "I'll blow your heads off if you move." Dennis Grehl and a co-worker complied. Dreamlike, he found himself lying face down on a cold, gritty black-tile floor, a pistol against the back of his head. "Please, mister, don't make me shoot you," a second gunman threatened. A crazy memory: tiny specks of light floating in the tile; that, and the paralyzing weight of helplessness. Mr. Grehl is a pharmacist, unassuming, mild mannered. A family man with a wife and a daughter. He was being robbed.