

Leads in Narrative Writing

TALKING LEAD

This lead begins with dialogue.



Boring:

There was a bat in our house last summer.

Better:

"Quick, hit the floor," my dad yelled. "Whatever you do, don't look up!" my mother added as I dropped to the floor and slid myself under my bed. It was a terrifying night for my family when we discovered a bat in our house.

SOUND EFFECT LEAD

This lead gets the reader quickly involved in the story by starting with an event or some kind of action.



Boring:

There was a loud storm outside my house last night.

Better:

Smash! The window cracked, the wind howled, and the door flung open. Rain poured in through the screen, drenching the welcome mat inside our house. I will never forget the fierce storm that invaded my house last night.

ACTION LEAD

You can get the reader quickly involved in the story by starting with an exciting event or some kind of action.

Boring:

I was excited for my birthday party.

Better:

I threw on my favorite red dress and scrambled down the stairs as fast as I could. It was my 8th birthday, and I couldn't wait for the party to begin.



SNAPSHOT LEAD

When you paint a picture with words, you draw the reader in.

Boring:

Ice-skating is my favorite sport.

Better:

It's ten degrees below zero, and the river is frozen a foot thick. It makes snapping sounds like the limbs of a tree cracking. A lone figure glides along the black ice, moving towards the city. The only sound is the scraping of each blade as it bites into the river. That's me doing my favorite sport, ice-skating.



QUESTION LEAD

This lead begins by asking an interesting question.



Boring:

In this story I will tell you about playing football with my friends.

Better:

In what sport can you tackle opponents, catch 30-yard touchdown passes in overtime, and sack the quarterback before he can even complete a pass? In football, of course. It's my favorite sport.

FLASHBACK LEAD

This lead takes the reader back to a specific event in the past that relates to the topic.



Boring:

I remember the time when I won the game for my team.

Better:

I could feel the sweat pouring off my body as I watched the seconds tick off the clock. It was as if I was dribbling in slow motion, weaving in and out of the defenders, and heading towards the hoop. As the buzzer sounded, I felt the ball roll off of my finger tips, and I watched anxiously as it spun around the rim for what seemed like an eternity. I finally heard the swish of the net. I had won the game for my team!