

## **Getting your story off to a good start**

A quick overview of three ways to vary your leads. Add them to your 'writing toolbox.'

### **Gerund Phrase**

We can use a variety of grammatical options to begin our leads, providing answers for readers in the best order while adding variety to our writing. For instance, a popular lead involves the "gerund phrase." This begins with a gerund and features action or an interesting detail. A gerund consists of an "-ing" form of a verb used as a noun.

For example: Drinking alcohol, using drugs, having sex and just generally being yucky and rebellious are behavior traits at other high schools, but certainly not at ours,' Principal Ernie Kenerski told parents Friday night. "Drinking," "using," and "having" are all gerunds.

From the following facts, write a gerund phrase lead:

- Ecology Club set goals for the year at a meeting Tuesday, September 12.
  - One goal will be to double membership.
  - Another goal is to clean up a polluted creek.
  - A third goal is to raise money for Greenpeace.
  - Ecology Club president Ben Coleman announced the goals
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### **Causal Clause**

A second grammatical lead is the "causal clause." This begins with "because," "since," or "because of," and shows a causal relationship between facts. For example: Because of the recent food fights in the cafeteria, chili will no longer be served as the school has been plagued with complaints that the grease stains are difficult to remove from clothing, walls and ceilings.

From the following facts, write a causal clause lead:

- One parent complained that teachers were not dressed appropriately.
  - Board President Alton Shibley proposes a teacher dress code policy.
  - The policy states that teachers may not wear jeans, T-shirts, and any clothing that depicts drugs, alcohol or violence or that makes a political statement. The School Board passed the proposal, 7-2.
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### **Concessive Clause**

A third grammatical lead is the "concessive clause." This begins with "though," "although," or "despite," and expresses difficulties overcome or unusual circumstances. For example: Although Rhonda Rah Rah lost both her pom pons along with her hairbrush and mirror, and had a really nasty zit in the middle of her forehead, she was still able to lead cheers and meet her friends at the football game.

From the following facts, write a concessive clause lead:

- In pre-season polls, district coaches predicted the team would finish last in the conference.
  - The varsity basketball team has no returning starters.
  - The team won its season opener 72-60 over top-ten rated Arapahoe HS.
  - Jimmy Henderson, junior guard, led the team in scoring with 26 points.
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