

## TYPES OF LEADS

The lead (beginning or introduction) establishes the direction your writing will take. A good lead grabs your reader's attention and refuses to let go. In other words, it hooks the reader. Below are some ideas on how to write an interesting lead. Not every type of lead will work for every writer or for every piece of writing. You'll have to experiment with them. Be sure to have at least three sentences in your lead, whatever type it may be.

### Question

🍎 Open with an interesting question that relates to the main idea.

🔔 Example: Have you ever wondered how you would survive if you found yourself alone in the wilderness? How would you defend yourself against predators? What would you eat? Where would you find water?

### Riddle

🍎 Open with a riddle that the reader can solve by reading further. You may want to give the answer right away or save it for the conclusion.

🔔 Example: What textbook has no pages, is miles wide, and smells like a creek? It's been around for millions of years. That's right--Outdoor School.

### Announcement

🍎 Open with an announcement about what is to come. However, do not insult the reader by saying something like, "I am going to tell you about..." The reader should be able to figure out what you are writing about. If not, there is something wrong with what you have written, not with the reader.

🔔 Example: The trait of voice is very important in writing. However, it is difficult to teach and even more difficult to learn. It is similar to athletic ability because it is more like a talent than a skill.

## Bold and Challenging Statement

- A bold and challenging statement is similar to an announcement, but is meant to cause some people to disagree with what you say. It's like one side of an argument. It can be an opinion, but don't immediately state that it is your opinion.

▲ Example: Using horses and cattle in the sport of rodeo is animal abuse. What makes it more aggravating is that it is legal. According to the law, there is nothing wrong with chasing an animal down, tightening a rope around its neck, knocking it to the ground, and tying its legs together so it cannot move.



## Definition

- Open with a definition of the term you are discussing. It can be your own or come from a dictionary or textbook. If you take it from a dictionary or textbook, be sure to use quotation marks and give credit to the source.

▲ Example: According to Webster's Dictionary, a government is the authority that serves the people and acts on their behalf. How can the government know what the people want if the people do not vote? If we do not vote, the government may act on its own behalf instead of on the behalf of the people.



## Opinion


- Open with your opinion about the topic. This is similar to a bold and challenging statement, but you let the reader know that it is your opinion right away.

▲ Example: In my opinion, the driving age should be lowered to fourteen. Most teenagers are more responsible than adults give us credit for being. Just because we are teenagers does not mean we are irresponsible and dangerous.




## Well Known Quotation or Quotation from a Famous Person


- Open with a quotation that is well known or from a famous person. Be sure to put quotations around the quotation and give credit to the person who said it. Of course, the quotation must be directly related to your topic. A good source is a book of quotations. Look in the library or ask your teacher.

 Example: President John F. Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." I think today's Americans have forgotten Kennedy's message. We expect our country to take care of us, but we are not taking care of our country.




### Quotation Not from a Famous Person


 Open with a quotation from a person that is not famous. It could be a character from the story or someone you know personally. You still must put it in quotation marks and give credit to the person who said it.

 Example: When I was a child, I was given the "mother's curse" by my mom. Oh, it is not anything mean or evil. She just said, "When you have children, they will act just like you." I laughed. Well, now that I have children of my own, I am not laughing anymore. The "mother's curse" really works!




### Personal Experience


 Open with something that has happened to you, or a personal experience. It could be a part of the story, or it could be something that is not a part of what you are writing about but still relates to the topic.

 Example: Although I did later in my room, I never cried at my grandfather's funeral. I guess that is why I felt so sad for the little girl standing next to her grandma's coffin. She looked so lost and afraid.



### Figurative Language

 Begin with a simile (comparison using like or as), metaphor (comparison saying one thing is another thing), personification (giving something nonhuman human qualities), or hyperbole (exaggeration.) The figurative language must relate directly to your topic.

 Example: The pencil sharpener was always hungry. It ate my pencil every time I went to sharpen it. It never seemed to do this to anyone's pencil but mine. What was so special about my pencils?



## Enumerated General Statement

- Begin with a general statement containing three or so ideas about your topic. The information given in the lead is general, not specific. The specific details that support the general statement will appear later in the paper.

▲ Example: There are many characteristics that a good teacher possesses. However, the **three most important** characteristics include being a good listener, being knowledgeable about the subject, and having a kind heart. All of the teachers who positively influenced me had all three of those characteristics in common.

