

PART I
NEWSWRITING

CHAPTER 1

THE LEAD

A NEWS STORY is composed of two parts -- the lead and the body. The lead is the first paragraph of the story; usually it is only one sentence. The lead contains the main facts of the story and the body contains further information about these facts.

SAMPLE NEWS STORY

HEAD LINE	}	COCO THE CLOWN DIES IN UK
BY LINE		
DATE LINE	{	PETERSBUROUGH, ENGLAND (AP)
LEAD LINE	{	Coco the clown, who delighted youngsters for more than 48 years in circus big tops around the world, died yesterday in Petersburg district hospital.
BODY	{	Coco whose real name was NICOLAI POLLAKOFF, was secretive about his age and give varying birth dates. A spokesman for Robert Bros Circus, in which Coco performed recently, said he was 78. The stocky, sad-faced little man was attmitted to the hospital last week suffering from actue bronchitis. Coco was born into a family of Russian circus performers and, as he told the story, was left to fend for himself when his father was conscripted in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

This story doesn't have a by-line. The by-line gives the name of the person who wrote the story, and usually only very big stories get by-lines.

The dateline gives the date the story was written and the city in which it was written. The date is often omitted, and one assumes that the story was written the same day the newspaper was published, or perhaps the day before. Sometimes the name of the city is not given -- this means that the story was written in the same city in which the newspaper was published.

The initials "(A P)" or "(UPI)" at the end of the dateline stand for "Associated Press" and "United Press International," world-wide news agencies which collect news, write stories, and distribute these stories to newspapers.

FIVE RULES FOR WRITING A GOOD LEAD

1. The lead should be short so that it can be read quickly -- no more than about 35 words. Generally the lead is only one sentence.
2. The lead should contain all the most important facts of the story. It is like a summary of the story, except that it comes at the beginning. For example, a lead might say,

The Association of Farmers will distribute free rice in Boxley Square tomorrow at 6 a.m., in honor of the King's birthday, Mr. Birdie N. Lakawanna, president of the Association, announced today.

Surely if a man wanted to tell this friend this news quickly, his first words would be, "Free rice!" In order to give all the essential information about this free rice, a sentence like the sentence above is quite efficient.

To help remember what information is important, newswriters learn to ask themselves five questions: who? what? where? when? why? Any lead which answers all these questions is sure to contain all the essential information of the story. The example on the following page answers all these questions nicely--

who? *the Association of Farmers, Birdie N. Lakawanna, President*

what? *will distribute free rice*

where? *in Boxley Square*

when? *tomorrow at 6 a.m.*

why? *in honor of the King's birthday*

The lead also often gives the source of the news, which is the name of the person or agency from which the news comes: **Mr. Birdie N. Lakawanna, president of the Association, announced today.**

Sometimes it is also desirable for the lead to answer the question "how?" For example, in the following lead --

Two men escaped from the Woodside Jail on Pacific Street early this morning, *by making their guards believe they were sick.*

3. The lead should give the most important facts first. Usually "who" and "what" are the most important facts of a story, and these are generally give in the subject, verb, and object. Then "where", "when", "why" and any other information may be given in phrases. Most leads begin with subject, verb, object, but occasionally a lead will open with a phrase.
4. The lead should have a strong verb. It is rather difficult to say what a strong verb is, but it is easy to say what is *not*; A strong verb is *not* the verb *to be* (am, are, is, were, has been, will be, should be, etc.). and it is *not* a *passive* verb.

ACTIVE VERBS (strong)

Lek sang the song.
She will return the book.
The storm destroyed our house.
The director has chosen three people.

He prepares all our food specially.
The merchant is cheating that shopper.

PASSIVE VERBS (weak)

The song was sung (by Lek).
The book will be returned (by her).
Our house was destroyed (by the storm).
Three people have been chosen (by the director).

All our food is specially prepared (by him).
That shopper is being cheated (by the merchant).

You will notice that in the sentences with active verbs, the subject *does something* (sings, returns, destroys, etc.). But in the sentences with passive verbs, the subject does nothing; rather, the subject “receives” an action. This is why passive verbs are considered “weak”. They are certainly not bad to use, and in some forms of writing they are very desirable. But in newswriting strong statements are preferred, so journalists learn to avoid passive verbs and the verb *to be*.

Notice too that in the sentences with passive verbs, the phrases at the end may be omitted. For example, one may write “The song was sung by Lek,” or one may simply write, “The song was sung.” Thus these sentences answer the question *who?* either at the end of the sentence or not at all. This is another reason why journalists avoid passive verbs.

5. The lead should assume a certain amount of knowledge on the part of the reader. It should not explain too much and it should not explain too little. For example, if there were a story about sodium glutamate in food products, it would be necessary to explain what sodium glutamate is. But in a story about a samlor drivers’ strike, it would not be necessary to explain what samlor drivers are, because we assume that most people already know.

EXAMPLES OF LEADS

Study the examples below to see how they follow the five rules for writing a good lead.

Example 1 Police arrested alleged Golden Triangle kingpin Zaw Zeing (44), his wife, and his brother Zaw Tu (38) in a dawn raid in Bangkok yesterday.

1. Is the lead suitably short?
2. Does it contain the important facts?
3. Does it put the more important facts before the less important?
4. Does it have a strong verb?
5. Does it explain enough, but not too much?

NOTES: Newspapers traditionally identify people by giving their ages after their names.

This lead has only one fault: it does not sufficiently tell “where”. It says “in Bangkok”, but it should also tell what part of the city, and even give the street address.

This lead assumes that the reader knows that the “Golden Triangle” is a center for the cultivation of opium.

Example 2 Two kilograms of heroin No. 4, valued at about 20 million baht on the U.S. market, were seized at the Taipei Hotel last night, and three persons, including a police sergeant, were arrested.

1. Is the lead suitably short?
2. Does it contain the important facts?
3. Does it put the more important facts before the less important ?
4. Does it have strong verbs?
5. Does it explain enough, but not too much?

NOTES: This is not a bad lead, but it does break some of the rules which **we are studying**.

The value of the heroin is given in ten words, which is about one-third of the whole lead. The value of the heroin, however, is less important than the verb “seized,” which comes after it.

Also, most people probably do not know what “heroin No. 4” is.

To make this lead follow all the rules we have been studying, we could rewrite it in the following way:

Police seized two kilograms of heroin and arrested three people, one of them a police sergeant, at the Taipei Hotel last night.

Exercise 1

The following sentences have passive verbs. Rewrite them with active verbs.

1. The envelope was opened by the judge.
2. These charges will be answered by our lawyer.
3. The story has been printed by all the newspapers.

4. Sugar is bought at low prices by our agent.
5. The pictures are being studied by them.
6. These statements are supported by the witness.
7. These statements are supported by the witnesses.
8. This statement is supported by the witness.
9. This statement is supported by the witnesses.
10. The jewels have been taken to Australia by Mr. Alexander.

Exercise 2

Below are three leads which do not entirely follow the five rules given above. Rewrite these leads so that they satisfy all the rules.

- (1) In the worst outbreak of student violence this year, buses were hijacked and bombed in the capital yesterday, a police station was threatened, and a police chief inspector was beaten up by rioting students.

- (2) Yesterday in three provinces in the North and Northeast police seized three shipments of smuggled arms and ammunition and arrested four officials of the Internal Security Command.

- (3) The president of the Land Transport Operators' Association, a group of companies which operate transportation services throughout the country, termed "impossible" yesterday the Communications Ministry's condition that bus companies improve their services before a fare increase is allowed.

Exercise 3

Below is information for a lead. Write a good lead using this information.

- who? Russian trade representatives
- what? will hold Thailand's first Soviet trade exposition
- where? in Lumpini Park
- when? from November 10 to December 15 this year
- why? to display products ready for export

CHAPTER 2

THE LEAD

(Continued)

THE PURPOSE of this chapter is to study leads which have too little or too much information. A lead with too many facts will usually be too long and rather confusing. Another lead might contain *enough* facts, but not *the right* facts.

Example 1 Police Director-General Prachuab Suntrangkorn ordered the formation of special “flying squads” yesterday to deal with rampaging vocational students, who wrecked three buses and assaulted two policemen in a fresh outbreak of violence yesterday.

1. Is it suitably short?
2. Does it contain the important facts?
3. Does it put the more important facts before the less important?
4. Does it have strong verbs?
5. Does it explain enough, but not too much?

NOTES: This lead does not tell “where,” but on the other hand it contains too much information. All of the information is important, but there is so much of it that it is a little confusing. It would be more clear if it were written as two short paragraphs --

Police Director-General Prachuab Suntrangkorn ordered the formation of special “flying squads” yesterday to deal with rampaging vocational students.

This order came after students of commercial schools wrecked three buses and injured two policemen in a fresh outbreak of violence yesterday afternoon.

When a lead has enough information for two paragraphs, the second paragraph is called the “second lead.” But the first lead contains all of the important information, because the phrase “rampaging vocational students” sums up the facts given in the second lead.

Example 2 A Kasetsart University agriculture student was arrested yesterday while attempting to run toward His Majesty the King during a degree-awarding ceremony in the university auditorium.

NOTES: According to the five rules, this lead is O.K. except that it has a passive verb. When reading the rest of the story, however, we find two more very interesting pieces of news •

1. The student shouted something like “Long live Jesus.”
2. Plainclothesmen stopped the student.

These two pieces of information belong in the lead because the first suggests an answer to the question “why?” and the second provides a subject to use with an active verb:

Plainclothesmen stopped a Kasetsart University agriculture student as he ran toward His Majesty the King shouting something like “Long live Jesus” in a degree-awarding ceremony in the university auditorium yesterday.

Exercise 1

On the next page are two leads, one with too little and one with too much information. Rewrite these leads, adding and dropping information as you think best.

- (1) Taxi driver Poon Lamlueprasert, the man alleged to have sparked the bloody Ptabptachai riots, appeared in the Bangkok South District Court yesterday charged with insulting and assaulting police officers.

Other facts from this story --

- a. He was remanded in custody until Sept.4. (He was kept in jail until his trial on Sept. 4.)
 - b. He entered no plea. (He did not say whether he was guilty or not.)
 - c. He has a wife and three children.
- (2) (Divide the following lead into two paragraphs. Include in the first lead a phrase which sums up the information in the second lead. Omit any information that is not necessary.)

In an urgent to fight the drought plaguing the Northeast, the government has ordered the Royal Thai Air Force and the Police Department to make airplanes available for artificial rain-making and the Royal Irrigation Department to mobilize 45 water-pumping units to channel water from neighboring rivers to the arid plateau, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Co-operatives Dr. Thalerng Nawasawasdi told the Assembly yesterday.

Exercise 2

Write a lead from the information given below. It is not necessary to use all the information. Use the information you think is important for the lead.

There was a teenage boy at Pratunam.

There was a Pakistani air hostess at Pratunam.

Her name is Joyce Chances (Miss).

She was wearing a gold bracelet and chain around her neck.

It was Wednesday night.

She was shopping.

The locket and chain were worth about 6,000 baht.

The boy snatched the locket and chain.

She shouted for help in her native language.

Her native language is Urdu.

No one understood her.

The boy fled.

CHAPTER 3

THE BODY

THE BODY of a news story gives further information about the facts introduced in the lead.

The body may be short -- just one or two paragraphs -- or it may be ten or eleven paragraphs or longer.

In the body, as in the lead, more important information comes first, and less important information comes later. There are two reasons for this. First, a news story should give information quickly; therefore the more important facts should come closer to the beginning of the story so the reader will see them sooner: often readers who are in a hurry read only the first few paragraphs of a story and do not read the end. Second, when it is necessary for the editor to shorten the story, he usually shortens it by cutting off the last paragraph, or the last two or three paragraphs.

- Example 1** The current Lumpini Park renovation program will include a ban on all car-parking in the grounds, Bangkok Governor Siri Santabutr announced yesterday.
- The city will construct new, multi-level parking garages where visitors to the Park will be able to leave their vehicles.
- The renovation program also calls for an insect museum on the Park's island, and boats and water bicycles on the lake
- During the last few years the city has spent more than six million baht on improvements for the Park, and Governor Siri noted that 60-70% of the work has already been completed.
- Lead
(renovation program parking ban)*
- information on the parking ban*
- information on the renovation program*
- information on the renovation program*

Example 2	<p>UN officials discovered a cache of dynamite in the “meditation room” at UN headquarters yesterday and summoned New York City Police bomb experts to remove it.</p> <p>The police experts found five sticks of dynamite under a seat in the small, darkened room near the main public entrance, Colonel H.A. Trimble, UN security chief, said.</p> <p>The dynamite had no detonation device, Trimble added.</p> <p>Police declined to say if they had arrested anyone or if they had any idea who put the explosives in the ground-floor room.</p> <p>A UN guard found the dynamite about 9 a.m. a few minutes before the building was opened to visitors, Trimble said.</p> <p>The meditation room, open to delegates and visitors for prayer and meditation, lies a few yards from corridors used by UN delegates and thousands of daily tourists.</p> <p>UN officials closed the room to the public yesterday. All other facilities at the UN opened as usual.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <p><i>dynamite</i> <i>meditation room</i> <i>UN officials</i></p> <p><i>dynamite</i></p> <p><i>police</i></p> <p><i>UN officials</i> <i>yesterday</i></p> <p><i>meditation room</i></p> <p><i>UN officials</i> <i>meditation room</i></p>
Example 3	<p>Sony Corporation paid the highest taxes of any Japanese firm in the business period from November 1973 through April 1974, despite a slight drop in its declared income, the National Tax Administration Agency reported today.</p> <p>The Agency’s income list covers 175 corporations in twenty different industrial fields capitalized at 100 million yen (6,600,000 baht) or more.</p> <p>The other nine corporations belonging to the “top ten” taxpayers in Japan were Kubota Ltd., Fuji Photo Film Co., Nisshin Spinning Co., Nippon Cakki Co., Toyobo Co., Toyō Kogyo Co., Kanebo Ltd., Omikinshi Spinning Co., and Suwa Seikosha Ltd.</p>	<p><i>Lead</i> <i>(Sony’s taxes, other firms’ taxes)</i></p> <p><i>otherfirms’ taxes</i></p> <p><i>other firms’ taxes</i></p>

The Agency said that Sony topped the income list with a declared income of 18,026 million yen (1,200 million baht), 9 percent lower than their income in the preceding year. *Sony's taxes*

NOTE: Since the Sony Corporation's taxes are mentioned in the lead as the highest taxes in Japan, the further information about Sony's taxes should come closer to the beginning of the story. If the editor has to cut this story, he will cut paragraph 4, and an important piece of information will be lost. This paragraph should really be the second paragraph in the story, and paragraph 2 above should come last.

Exercise 1

Below is a news story from a Bangkok newspaper. The whole story has only four paragraphs, but they are not in the correct order. Write "1" next to the paragraph you think should be first, "2" next to the paragraph you think should be second, etc.

The court termed Air France's dismissal "abuse of the right to dismiss."

The stewardess, Nobuko Furuki, who weights 57 kilograms (127 lbs) and is 159 centimetres (5 feet 2 inches) tall, was fired June 16 because Air France said "she is too fat, not well-proportioned and not suitable to the company's image of the stewardess."

The court said in an injunction, "She is not too fat for her age according to Japanese standards and her appearance is suitable to her age."

THE Tokyo District Court said yesterday Air France's dismissal of a 37-year-old stewardess because of her obesity was unreasonable and ordered the company to reinstate her.

Exercise 2

Here is another news story with the paragraphs mixed up. Number the paragraphs in the correct order, as you did in the preceding exercise.

Monki's mistress, identified as Mrs Clara P., who said she offered the unusual reward with the consent of her husband, told the daily newspaper Express here: "I would certainly have kept my promise with the two firemen if that had been necessary but I am very relieved to have been excused from doing so."

A BASHFUL German here has turned down a "mad and unforgettable night of love with all the refinements" offered as a reward for his having found a lost dog.

But they accepted the rest of it, US\$ 800 (6,600 baht) on behalf of the chaste and modest resident of the city who found the dog but wished to remain anonymous.

Monki, a Yorkshire terrier that had become the best known dog in Germany since its disappearance three weeks ago, was returned Sunday to its tearful mistress by two firemen who emphatically turned down that part of the reward.

Below you see the lead paragraph of a new story. After that, all the further information of the story is listed. You must write the body of the story using this information. Choose what you think are more important things and put them at the beginning of the body; put less important things at the end. Make the body about five short paragraphs.

Japan's highest temperatures of the summer drove millions to beaches yesterday and resulted in a rash of drowning deaths, police said.

(Further information, next page.....)

Further information:

Shonan and Miura are the most popular summer beaches for Tokyoites.

1.165 million people went to beaches in Chiba province.

Ibaragi province is northeast of Tokyo.

60 people died in swimming and boating accidents.

Police worked in the hot sun to keep the traffic moving.

A million people went to Shonan and Miura beaches.

Chiba province is southeast of Tokyo on the Pacific coast.

600,000 people went to beaches in Ibaragi province.

26 people were reported missing.

Shonan and Miura beaches are in Kanagawa province near Tokyo.

Crowds going to the beach caused an all-day traffic jam in

Kanagawa province.

CHAPTER 4

SOURCES

A NEWS STORY reports facts, not opinions. The reporter does not put his own ideas into the story. He does describe what he sees and hears, but he does not judge or criticize the news. Judging and criticizing is reserved for editorial and feature stories.

In a news story, for example, the reporter does not say a man is “tall”; he says the man is 1 m., 89 cm. He does not say “Mr. Smith was surprised”; he says “Mr. Smith said he was surprised” or “Mrs. Jones said Mr. Smith was surprised.” “Taxes in Bangkok this year will be 50% lower” is not correct; it should be “Taxes in Bangkok this year will be 50% lower according to the Minister of Finance.”

A source is a person or place from which information comes. The reporter gives the source of his information to help the reader to judge it for himself. For example if someone said to you, “Men’s fashions will be more colorful next year,” you might ask, “How do you know?” If he answered, “A taxi driver told me,” you probably would not have much confidence in the information. But if he answered, “A fashion designer told me,” you would suppose that the information was more likely to be true.

So the source of information is important. The reporter himself is not a source; the reporter gets information from a source, and then reports.

For information which is generally known, or which the reporter can easily see for himself, it is not necessary to give a source. For example, the reporter could say, “The truck that turned over was carrying bananas.” He does not have to add “... according to the driver” because the reporter himself can see the bananas on the road and in the truck.

When he gives an opinion, however, or when he gives information which he cannot know by himself, he must give the source: “*The woman affirmed that the thief was handsome and strong,*” or *The Prime Minister noted that the economy had improved.*”

Exercise 1

The story below has seven paragraphs. In every paragraph except one, a source is given. Find the sources.

BELFAST (UPI)

POLICE yesterday formally charged a British soldier with the murder of a Northern Ireland civilian and said he would be tried before civilian judges.

The police declined to identify the soldier, charged with shooting to death Patrick McElholme, 23, Wednesday, at his home at Pomeroy, 40 miles west of Belfast.

McElholme, a Roman Catholic, was shot in sight of his father, the McElholme family said.

The death raised to 1,054 the toll of five years of Northern Ireland violence involving the Protestant majority, Roman Catholic minority and security forces.

Mrs. McElholme said her son had just returned from Hay Fields for tea when two soldiers arrived and asked him out for questioning. The soldiers shook him and marched him away from the house, she said. "My husband Peter followed and then I heard a shot. I said to myself surely to God they didn't shoot poor Paddy. "My husband saw Paddy falling dead and lying in the meadow beside the road. He came running back to the house shouting Paddy's dead, Paddy's dead."

An army spokesman said he could not go beyond the initial report during the investigation.

EXAMPLE: Look for sources in the story below.

LOS ANGELES (UPI)
OWEN Brady, co-ordinator of the City Music Department and an organist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, was found dying in his wrecked and burning automobile Saturday, his body **riddled** with bullets.

The mild-mannered, 51-year-old Brady was pronounced dead at 2.25 a.m. after police extricated his body from the car.

Officers at first thought he had died of injuries and burns after the vehicle smashed into the wall of a

school building in an area where the Inglewood district borders central Los Angeles.

A further examination revealed there were a number of gunshot wounds in the body.

The **homicide** division of the police department was investigating Brady's death. One officer, who asked not to be identified, said there was no reason to believe that Brady had shot himself but that he either was wounded by someone in the car with him or by bullets fired from the street.

This story does not give sources for most of its information. The first four paragraphs give no sources at all:

Paragraph 1 Who said he was found? Who found him?

Paragraph 2 Who said he was "mild-mannered"? Is it the reporter's opinion?

Paragraph 3 This should read, "Officers at first *said* they thought"

Paragraph 4 Who said so? Who made the examination?

Paragraph 5 The first sentence of this paragraph is unnecessary and should be omitted. The rest of the paragraph is O.K.

Exercise 2

On the next page are two news stories with the paragraphs mixed up. The first story has eight paragraphs and the second has seven. Number the paragraphs in the correct order, as you did in the classwork in the preceding chapter.

A spokesman for Warden Floyd Arnold said the four prisoners were in an outdoor recreation area when the garbage truck drove into an adjoining area separated by an eight-foot chain link fence topped by barbed wire.

State police, sheriffs, deputies and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents, aided by dogs and helicopters, searched the wooded mountains within a 20-mile radius of the prison at Lewisburg.

The four then crashed through a second gate and out of the penitentiary grounds, the spokesman said.

The escaped prisoners included Richard F. McCoy, (31), convicted of hijacking a United Airlines jetliner on April 7, 1972, obtaining a \$500,00 ransom and then parachuting at night near his home town of Provo, Utah. The ransom later was recovered.

Sixteen miles from the maximum security prison they abandoned the truck, commandeered an auto containing a man and two women, whom they left on a roadside bound but unharmed, and disappeared into the Central Pennsylvania mountains.

By late Saturday night, state police said the fugitives had not been seen.

FOUR convicts, including a former Sunday school teacher who hijacked a passenger plane for \$500,000 (10 million baht) ransom, commandeered a garbage truck at a Federal penitentiary Saturday and crashed through two gates to freedom.

"They scaled the fence, pointed what appeared to be a gun at a prisoner driving the truck and a guard sitting beside him, forced the two out of the truck and crashed through a gate," the spokesman said.

Un sources in New York said Syria had admitted downing the plane with a surface-to-air missile. The sources did not elaborate and there was no official confirmation of the report.

UN spokesmen said the four-engine Canadian Buffalo aircraft crashed on Friday near Dima, on the Damascus-Beirut highway about 3 miles from the Syrian capital.

The official said that during the clash with the Israelis "a special UN plane passed through the area. Contact with the plane was lost and it later transpired it had crashed in Syrian territory."

In Ottawa, Canadian Defence Minister James Richardson announced that the United Nations had grounded its entire fleet of Canadian planes in the Middle East while the incident was being investigated.

The plane, assigned to the United Nations Middle East peace-keeping forces, was on a flight from Ismailia near the Suez Canal to Damascus. It carried a three-man Canadian crew and six Canadian servicemen.

A Syrian official in Damascus, however, implied the plane could have been shot down during an anti-air-craft barrage aimed at Israeli jets attacking guerrilla targets in nearby southern Lebanon.

UNITED Nations sources said yesterday Syria has admitted shooting down a UN plane near Damascus, killing nine Canadian members of the Middle East peace-keeping force.

Exercise 3

Below is the lead of a story. After it is a list of details. Using those details, write a body of five or six paragraphs. Choose the more important information for the first part of the body; remember to give the sources of your information when necessary.

CHIANGMAI

Parents accused a female school teacher of maltreating 18 pupils here by covering their faces with chili sauce because they refused to stop talking today.

Mrs. Pranom made no statement to the press

The village headman calmed down the angry parents

The district officer set up a committee to investigate the incident

Parents held a rally and demanded that the teacher be dismissed from school.

The teacher's name is Mrs. Pranom Saiproma

This happened at Village No. 4, Don Khaaw, Mae Rim district

The village headman requested that the district officer transfer Mrs.

Pranom to another district

The village headman's name is Sompoj Chairath

Mrs. Pranom has taught in that village for five years

(The following details were given to the reporter by children at the school)

The class was of 8 and 9 year old pupils

The class continued to talk after Mrs. Pranom told them to be quiet

The teacher became angry

She picked up a bowl of chili sauce and pasted it over the faces of 18 pupils

The 18 pupils were 14 girls and 4 boys