

CHAPTER 11

THE NEWS STORY LEAD

THERE is a logic of news presentation, and this logic has through the years gradually imposed upon the news story a definite technique. The previous chapter was given over to a discussion of that fundamental proposition. It is now necessary to study in detail the particulars of that technique.

A news story consists roughly of a lead, or opening section, and of a development of the facts or "body" of the story. (The headline is not part of the news story as written by the reporter.) News story leads are of two general sorts, one used normally on what we call straight news, and the other, borrowed and adapted from fictional forms, used normally upon feature material.

The straight news lead puts the news first. There are three general types of such news leads. One is a *summary lead* which summarizes the whole story. A second puts dramatic emphasis upon just *one outstanding fact* in the story. A third *groups together striking or important facts*, as well as summarizes.

The fiction type of lead also uses several different devices. It may *begin at the beginning* of the happening. It may play up some *human interest angle* or some unusual or curious feature. It may *group together* a number of unusual or striking features. But the distinctive characteristic in any type of fiction lead is that it does not give the reader the real news in the story in the opening sentence or paragraph. Thus such a lead is usually referred to as a *suspended interest lead*.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that a well-written lead is always important. That contains a suggestion for the beginning student reporter and to anyone else who writes copy for newspaper publication. The editor who hires a new reporter is delighted when that reporter turns in a story with a good lead. An editor is much more likely to use a story written by someone outside of

his staff if it has a lead that can be used as it is without rewriting it. A lead written with force and originality may get a story front page position, or be put on the Associated Press wires, when the same story with a stodgy, commonplace lead might be buried somewhere inside a daily newspaper.

Summary news lead: This summary lead does for the reader just what the name implies—it gives him at the beginning a rapid, clear, and often vivid survey of the essential facts of the story. It is often known as the “AP” lead because Associated Press stories usually start in this way. Other names sometimes given it are “clothesline” or “freight train” lead, because the whole story is strung together in one sentence. This lead, likely to be the first sentence or the first paragraph of the news story, tells the reader who, what, where, when, why, how, and sometimes how much. It puts first the most important or the most striking or the most unusual facts of the story in this first sentence, and if possible in the first words of the first sentence. If there is a climax to the story, that comes first.

But why do we begin a news story—and nine out of ten are so begun—in this way? Why is this type of beginning the *natural* way to open a news account? Because it enables us to do several things which are essential or desirable in the imparting of news:

1. It allows us to “blurt out” the important things in our story just as we would do if we were telling them.

2. It indexes our story by giving the reader at once a definite idea of what it is about, so that he can decide whether or not, among all of the stories in the paper, he wishes to read this one.

3. It enables the reader to get the gist of the story by reading only the first few lines if he does not desire to read further or devote more time to it.

4. It advertises the story by putting the most interesting, most unusual, and most important material first.

5. It facilitates newspaper makeup (as we shall see later) by making it possible to cut stories without rewriting them.

The summary lead, then, should contain a survey of the story embodying the most interesting or important points in the material. It will usually be a fairly complete survey if it answers the follow-

ing questions: who, what, where, when, how, and why. It must also give all possible emphasis to the high spot of the story—what newspapermen call the feature.

Now suppose that you have in your notes or in your mind the following material for a story:

Alberta Hoppe—score 98.92.

Van Kinney—score 97.2.

Seventy girls in 4-H health contest at Iowa State Fair. Twenty boys.

Health champions in the counties of the state competed in the championship contest at the fair.

Alberta 15 years old. Weighs 125. Five feet 5½ inches tall. Van is 17, 5 feet 7 inches, weighs 141.5.

Alberta—daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Hoppe. Lives four miles south of Cedar Rapids.

Van—son of Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Kinney, Davis County.

Judging completed last night. Prize a trip to the congress of 4-H clubs at the International in Chicago this fall.

The feature—the point that has, in the reporter's judgment, the greatest news value—must be decided upon. The story may have one outstanding feature, or there may be two or more points that are of almost equal news value. In this comparatively simple story what are the possible features?

1. Alberta Hoppe wins state girls' health contest.
2. Van Kinney wins state boys' health contest.
3. Combination of 1 and 2.
4. Girl made higher score in state health contest than boy.

It isn't always easy to say just which point is most important. And often it is possible, as indicated in No. 3 above, to consolidate two or more points.

The feature, whichever we may decide upon, wants to be thrown into the opening phrase or clause of our lead. Then we need to complete the summary by answering as many as possible of the questions—who, when, where, what, how, and why.

In this case the *who* will be contained in the feature—Alberta Hoppe and Van Kinney. The *when* is yesterday or last night. The *where* is the state fair at Des Moines. The *what* is the state boys and girls club health contest and its results. The *how* is, presumably, by making a higher score than any other of the competitors. The

why will have to go unanswered as far as our notes are concerned. We have no data on this point, although if we had asked the boy and girl to what they attributed their fine health we might have got interesting material as to the *why* of the story.

So with this analysis of the facts gathered, we would write a *summary or clothesline lead* for this story something like this:

Alberta Hoppe, 15, of near Cedar Rapids, and Van Kinney, 17, of Davis County, won the titles last night of healthiest Iowa 4-H club girl and club boy as a result of victories over 88 other club boys and girls in the state health contest held at the state fair in Des Moines.

If the story were for a paper outside of Des Moines, it would carry a date line, thus:

Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 3: Alberta Hoppe, 15, of near Cedar Rapids, and Van Kinney. . . .

Importance of summary type: It is important to study this type of beginning—this clothesline lead—with some care, because, as a glance at any paper will show, so large a proportion of stories begin in this way. There are two chief problems involved in the writing of good summary leads. These are:

1. *To make the lead complete.* This will usually be taken care of if as many as possible of the questions indicated above are answered. But the writer must prevent his lead from having any loose ends and must see to it that it is perfectly self-explanatory. To achieve this object it is necessary to identify any people who are mentioned and to explain any terms which would not be perfectly clear to the reader. In the health contest lead we identified the girl and boy by giving their age and residence.

2. *To give the lead interest.* Two methods will contribute to this purpose: the selection of the most interesting material, from a news point of view, for inclusion in the lead and the phrasing of the lead in a striking, original, and pointed way.

Success in the first depends upon one's sense of news value, his keenness in perceiving what will most greatly attract his reader. As to the second, the lead offers wide opportunities for the original and imaginative writer. The form is definitive and restricted, as "set," almost, as the sonnet form, but the content can be brightened and made attractive, primarily in two ways: through a careful and

imaginative choice of words and through variety of sentence structure.

Little need or can be said about the choice of words, except the general injunction that while the diction must be simple, straightforward, and instantly understandable, it should avoid the trite word and the trite phrase as it would the plague. To do this day in and day out in stories written in haste and under all kinds of conditions requires a large and flexible vocabulary and an unusual sensitiveness to word values.

Summary lead examples: The following examples, culled from a wide range of sources and types of news, will further illustrate how effective leads of the summary type can be written.

These leads, and others used through this chapter, have also been selected to illustrate what makes news in various fields; they can be considered as expanding the news discussions in previous chapters.

Take special note of the variety found in the sentence structure used by the reporters. They suggest again and again that there need be no dullness, no lack of vitality and interest in the opening sentence or sentences of a news lead:

Pennsylvania farmers, cooperating in a Federal program to hold the price of wheat up by storing surplus production, have placed 340,702 bushels of grain in storage already this year, the state agricultural conservation office reported today.

The 118 families of Hillsborough County who have rural rehabilitation loans canned 25,738 quarts of fruits and vegetables last year, or an average of 218 quarts to the family, and 40 quarts to each person, according to Mrs. Grace Ensign and Miss May Ola Miller, home management supervisors of the Farm Security Administration in the county.

Intercollegiate teams from 25 American schools and one Canadian university, and 4-H club members from 40 different states, matched abilities at the state fair grounds coliseum Saturday as hundreds of blue-bloods in the cattle world went on parade in the initial event of the National Dairy Show.

Production of a new type of glass, so closely resembling quartz in its properties as to constitute a form of artificial quartz, will be announced today by Amory Houghton, president of the Corning Glass Works. The new glass, made by an entirely new method, can be heated to a cherry red and then plunged into ice-water without breaking, it is said.

Batesville, Miss., June 1—Purchase by the Tallahatchie Valley Electric Power Association of the power distribution system of the Mississippi Power & Light Company in Crowder was announced here today by W. H. Saxton, project superintendent.

Electric service on the Utah-Idaho interconnected system of the Utah Power and Light Company reached an all-time high Monday when the company-purchased and generated power output totaled 3,001,823 kilowatt hours, it was announced Wednesday by J. A. Hale, vice-president in charge of operations.

Demonstrations of various tillage and soil and water conservation practices followed on the Dutton-Power soil conservation project were viewed yesterday by more than 100 farmers and business men of the Great Falls area who took part in the tour sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, county extension office and the soil conservation supervisor.

Approximately \$47,000 will be saved by farmers and stockmen of Dawson, McCone, Prairie, Richland and Wiboux counties during the next two years as the result of reduced interest rates on most types of Federal Land Bank and Land Commissioner loans, Knute Hustad, Glendive, secretary-treasurer of National Farm Loan Associations serving the counties, announced this week.

Plans for an all-day Guernsey tour sponsored by the Josephine County Guernsey Cattle Club for Tuesday, July 18, were completed Tuesday by the tour committee composed of Chairman Ben Nelson, Ray Johnson, Melvin King and Ernest Calhoun, president of the club.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for New York City's first "skyscraper" elementary school, an eight-story, \$2,000,000 building, will take place Saturday morning, James Marshall, president of the Board of Education, announced yesterday.

Ostrander, July 19 (AP)—Woods equipment of the Ostrander Railway Timber Company, which recently finished forty years of logging in Cowlitz County, is being moved to a new timber stand which the company will log near Dickey Prairie, Clackamas County, Oregon.

Members of the two McLean County dairy improvement associations sold 32 unprofitable cows during October, culling out low producers that promised little if any profit for the coming winter, according to H. Wayne Copenbarger and Walter Sunken, testers.

Iowa farmers received \$35,882,185 in agricultural conservation payments in connection with the 1940 farm program, according to an announcement by the AAA in Washington, D. C. Iowa payments ranked second in the nation out of a total of \$462,174,927 paid in the United States.

They looked, they saw, they talked, they questioned—those 250 junior and senior home economics students from Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan

and Ohio, who attended the annual Home Economics Women In Business Field Day November 14 and 15 at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Chicago to learn how home economics makes the wheels of business go round.

Berkeley, Calif. (UP)—A substitute egg white extracted from the soybean, cheaper than the real thing and not subject to spoilage, has been announced by two University of California women scientists. The product is tasty in cakes, candies, puddings and similar foods and produces an excellent meringue, Betty M. Watts and Doris Ulrich of the University have reported to the American Chemical Society.

Boston, Nov. 5 (Special to The New York Times)—A chemical manufactured to order by a "trained" soil bacillus, fed with a mixed diet of disease-producing bacteria, has proved itself in tests on animals and human beings to be 1,000 to 100,000 times more potent in the healing of local infections in humans than the drugs of the "sulfa" family. That discovery was reported before the annual clinical congress of the American College of Surgeons today.

Washington (Science Service)—Bad farming in past years, not bad flying, was the real cause of the fatal crash of a transport plane near Moorhead, Minn., Oct. 29, with the loss of 14 lives, in the opinion of soil scientists here, upon receiving the report that the plane was wrecked by running into a 25-foot deep ravine.

Cheyenne, Wyo. (UP)—Beaver is Wyoming's most valuable fur resource and the state Game and Fish Commission is launching an extensive long-range project to produce beaver on state and public lands as a crop, much in the same manner as livestock is produced by ranchers. "Present plans are to have Wyoming virtually a statewide 'beaver farm' by 1946," says Lester Bagley, game warden.

Tacoma, Wash., Nov. 7 (AP)—The third longest single suspension span in the world, the new \$6,400,000 Tacoma Narrows Bridge, cracked and fell with a roar 190 feet into Puget Sound today after swaying crazily in a high wind. It had a center span of 2,800 feet.

Choosing a feature for the lead: In nearly every set of facts that make up a news story is some one fact or group of related facts which may be used effectively in the opening words of the lead. This fact or a group of facts comprises the "feature," the outstanding "angle" of the story, and heightens interest of a lead. That feature may be the climax of the story; it may be some unusual thing, or some humorous incident, or an important local phase, or some one of various other angles.

Perhaps no other group of reporters exercises more ingenuity in getting a "feature" into the lead than sports writers, and so we

are presenting a number of leads of football stories which illustrate the endless variety that is possible in the choice of a feature. All but one are from the sports pages of a Sunday issue of the *New York Times*.

Note how the reporter in each instance selected some significant fact for a "starter" and then continued with the essential facts of the game. Possible bids to post-season "bowl" games, the weather, attendance, previous record of teams, outstanding performance of a player, and other features were selected and then each was woven skillfully into the story with a minimum of words.

Philadelphia, Nov. 22 (Special)—In a hopelessly one-sided game that contrasted with last year's thrilling spectacle, Pennsylvania today concluded its most satisfying season since 1924 with a 16-0 victory over Cornell before 73,000 at Franklin Field.

Athens, Ga., Nov. 22 (AP)—Frankie Sinkwich and the Georgia football team made twin bids today, routing Dartmouth, 35-0, before 17,000 fans to reassert Georgia's hope for an Orange Bowl invitation and Frankie's bid for an All-America rating.

Ann Arbor, Mich., Nov. 22 (AP)—Ohio State's Buckeyes and the Michigan Wolverines ran over one another, depending upon which team had the ball, to finish in a 20-to-20 tie today before a capacity throng of 85,753.

Pittsburgh, Nov. 22 (UP)—"Pepper" Petrella, a slippery little halfback from Downingtown, Pa., slithered through the hands of the Panthers today for three touchdowns to give a young Penn State eleven a 31-to-7 victory over Pittsburgh before 33,000 fans.

Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 22 (AP)—Mississippi's once-beaten Rebels rushed on toward a possible bowl bid today with a sloshing 18-0 victory over Arkansas before about 10,000 rain-soaked fans.

Ames, Ia., Nov. 22 (AP)—Iowa State's Cyclones, beaten four times by other Big Six foes, battled Kansas State's favored Wildcats to a 12-to-12 tie today in their final Conference football game before 6,000 chilled fans.

Bloomington, Ind., Nov. 22 (AP)—Purdue and Indiana, rivals of old, battled rain, snow and each other to a standstill for more than three quarters today but finally Sophomore Billy Hillenbrand, the "Evansville Express," smashed across the goal line, and Indiana captured its only 1941 Western Conference victory, 7 to 0, before 24,000 chilled and dripping spectators.

Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. 22 (AP)—Minnesota's mighty tide of football empire—with Captain Bruce Smith brilliantly riding the crest of the wave—swept over Wisconsin today to carry the Gophers to the Western Conference and national football championship. With Smith ending his college career in All-America fashion, Minnesota rolled over the Badgers, 41-to-6.

Evanston, Ill., Nov. 22 (AP)—Robert C. Zuppke, the little man no longer there, ended a brilliant 29-year coaching career today emotionally watching his "Fighting Illini" go down to a crushing defeat before Northwestern, 27-to-0.

Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 22 (AP)—Once-beaten Vanderbilt enhanced its bid for a post-season bowl game today by burying Alabama in the quagmire of Dudley Field, 7 to 0, before a rain-soaked crowd of 12,000.

Lawrence, Kan., Nov. 22 (AP)—Missouri, its T-Formation ticking off dazzling long runs with the regularity of the falling snow and rain, capped an undefeated Big Six season today with a dynamic 45-6 triumph over Kansas.

Portland, Ore., Nov. 22 (UP)—Oregon State College, with its reserves playing a good part of the game, kept its favored Rose Bowl standing today by trouncing University of Montana 27-0 in a non-conference football tilt before 5,000 fans.

Stories of fires furnish opportunity for writing effective leads. A number of such leads are given below.

Walla Walla, July 27—Growing fields of golden grain quickly changed to burned and desolate waste as fire struck again today in the Waitsburg-Prescott area and estimates of 4,000 and possibly 5,000 acres burned out were placed by farmers in the area. All efforts to stop the fast-spreading flames failed, and the fire had to burn itself out as it swept down the Whetstone ridge toward Prescott.

Prescott, July 17—Flames roared over an area of probably 4,000 acres Thursday night in a huge grain fire more than five miles long in the vicinity of Clydem, north of here, destroying thousands of dollars worth of standing and stacked grain.

Eminence, Ky., Jan. 14—Approximately 65 head of livestock, including 55 registered Jersey dairy cows, perished early this morning in a \$10,000 fire which wiped out the dairy plant owned and operated by Worth and Dee Ellis, Shelby County landowners and dairymen.

A huge brush and grass fire on historic Antelope island in Great Salt Lake threatened at least one ranch and possibly others early Wednesday, as nearly four score fire fighters failed to gain control over the rapidly spreading flames.

An army of weary men, 2,000 strong, were on forest fire lines in Oregon and Washington Friday, hoping that rising temperatures and sinking humidity

would not increase the already grave blaze hazards. (From summary story in *Portland Oregonian*.)

New Haven, Conn., Sept. 24 (AP)—Fire of undetermined origin destroyed the 2,000-foot New England steel ship pier of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad here today with an estimated loss of more than \$200,000. Seven persons fighting the fire were injured.

Hood River, Ore., July 29 (AP)—Five firemen were slightly injured in a fire that destroyed two apple packing establishments here early Saturday at a loss estimated by firemen at nearly \$250,000.

The name of a prominent person connected with a news story may be used in the lead with good effect, even when he is not the central fact in the story. Otherwise, it is usually better to begin the story with some other feature. Politicians in office and others who seek personal publicity like to see news stories begin with their name. This explains why many publicity releases from public offices and departments begin with some such lead as "John J. Doesmith, chairman of the State Something Department, announced today that . . ." Such a beginning is not desirable in most cases. County agents, home demonstration agents, vocational teachers, field workers, organization officials, and others who wish publicity for their activities should rarely give out a publicity "release" beginning with their own names.

Following are some effective leads which correctly begin with a name:

George Lynn, Niles, Ohio, junior, is the new captain of the Ohio State University football team. He was elected by the lettermen of the '41 team just prior to the annual appreciation dinner for the team at the men's gym on the university campus Monday night, where his selection was first announced.

Washington, Nov. 21—President Roosevelt signed today, but with objections, the \$587,000,000 defense roads authorization bill which differed in only minor particulars from a measure which he vetoed Aug. 4.

Viscount Halifax, British ambassador to the United States, will address the annual convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation here December 10, Edward A. O'Neal, federation president, has announced.

Nacogdoches, Texas, June 1—E. Leroy Ross, of Mount Enterprise, had traveled a distance of 100,000 miles in pursuit of a college education when he

received his B. S. degree from A. W. Birdwell, president of the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, it was estimated here Saturday.

Bowling Green, Ky., Jan. 14—Joseph Alexander, Barren County 4-H Club member, was announced today by Freeman Griffin, assistant Warren County farm agent, as winner of first prize in the annual district 4-H tobacco show and sale held here December 17.

Worcester, Mass., Nov. 17 (AP)—Albert A. Goss, a farm leader who sees agriculture "gravely endangered by overcentralization of control in Washington," today was elected master of the National Grange at its seventy-fifth annual convention. He succeeds Louis J. Taber, of Columbus, Ohio, national master for 18 years, who asked to be relieved.

Dr. K. W. Stouder of Ames, extension veterinarian at Iowa State College, said Wednesday that recent wet weather may result in a heavy increase in live-stock poisoning from cornfields.

Striking facts or circumstances sometimes offer themselves to solve the question of what shall be put into the lead. A good rule of thumb for the beginner in finding them is to search for fact or facts that make the particular story different from other similar stories. When news is looked at from such an angle, the variations in choice are many.

The following leads are suggestive of what may be found:

Eighty-five percent of the women's shoes for fall will be black suede, Santa Barbara shoe merchants reported today on their return from the California Shoe Retailers' Association convention held at the Biltmore hotel in Los Angeles.

The sun streamed through the chartreuse curtains of the Addison E. Holton living room Thursday where Barbara and her mother, Mrs. Holton, stood before the bay banked with white flowers and received from 4 to 6 p.m.

Wenona (PNS)—Almost 2,000 attended the four sessions of the fourth annual Corn and Home Economics show held at the high school Friday and Saturday.

Golden dust on the soap bubbles in which a woman was washing her husband's overalls, so the story runs, prompted the process of flotation in extracting metal from ore and has contributed to the reworking of Virginia's once rich gold mines.

Gainesville, Fla.—Peanut hull bran, a Southern product, can be used effectively mixed with sand in rooting cuttings of ornamental plants, it has been found by John V. Watkins, assistant horticulturist with the University of Florida.

Azalea plants were in bloom throughout New Orleans Friday, several weeks before their usual flowering season.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Jan. 2 (AP)—A crop-dusting airplane working over a bean field here today crashed into telephone wires, disrupting telephone communications with Miami and seriously injuring the pilot.

Coalinga, Cal., April 20 (UP)—Countless millions of ravenous young grasshoppers crawled and hopped into rich agricultural areas in western San Joaquin Valley today as farmers and state and county authorities united in efforts to eradicate them before they obtained wings to fly over wider areas.

Substitution of honey for sugar, rye bread and corn meal foods for wheat foods, and diluted grape juice and water for milk in the diet of children have been found in certain cases to act as effective aids to defective hearing, the clinical congress of the American College of Surgeons was told yesterday by Dr. James A. Rabbitt of Philadelphia in a general review on medical and surgical aids to hearing.

Tifton, Ga., Jan. 13—County farm demonstration agents do not have much time to fool around, if the report of Agent C. B. Culpepper for Tift County for last year is a fair example.

Brandon, Miss., Jan. 2—Conservation of the soil and better use of the land are double objectives of the county extension program in Rankin County, says R. G. Prescott, county agent, in his annual report.

Bloomfield, N. J., Oct. 18—An improved "Klystron," a generator that sends electrical power through the air, was demonstrated today before 100 engineering professors and other educators from 75 eastern colleges and universities and other guests at the laboratories of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company here.

Springfield, Ill. (AP)—Molasses—an ingredient of grandmother's ginger bread, baked beans and Indian pudding, but uncommon in present day diets—received quite a plug Friday from State Health Director A. C. Baxter.

Urbana, Ill., April—Children are not "ornery" little brats just because they do not like the vegetables served to them, contends Miss Harriet Barto, assistant professor of dietetics, University of Illinois.

McLean—Fifty acres plowed in two and a half hours was a new kind of record for a good neighbor deed Monday afternoon down at William McCance's home four miles south of town.

The place where a news story happens is seldom important enough

to feature in the opening words, though "where" is nearly always given somewhere in the lead. Yet at times, the place is important or so unusual that the reporter makes use of it to begin the lead. Some examples are:

West Virginia State College will be host Friday and Saturday to the fourth annual West Virginia Scholastic Press conference, Hillery C. Thorne, secretary-treasurer of the conference, said Monday.

Knoxville, Ia.—Marion County is making a bid for the title of Iowa's leading beef cattle area of Iowa.

Weiser, Ida., Aug. 1 (AP)—Hell's Canyon—America's deepest known gorge—drew five adventurous boatmen into its depths today as they embarked upon a hazardous expedition designed to survey the feasibility of a proposed \$12,000,000 highway along the Snake River.

Far up in the sky, a darkly silver cross against the sunlit blue, an airplane droned steadily on its bee-line course.

Out beyond the headlands where the sky meets the sea it was murky yesterday. To watchers on the Golden Gate Bridge the low clouds began to take on strange shapes as they moved toward the strait. The first to approach had formed themselves into trim gray destroyers . . .

Likewise *time* is not often used as a feature for a lead, although practically always the time of the event or happening is included somewhere near to it. However, it may be the important, significant feature, as the following leads suggest:

Shelley, Idaho—Two minutes after he had mentioned to a sidewalk group no punctures had occurred in the lifetime of the car, Orbie Shoemaker of Shelley, garage employee, returned to find one tire flat.

Kent, O., April 15—By this time next year, Dr. Eileen W. Earlanston, assistant professor of biology at Kent State College here, will be riding elephants through the tall grasses of India.

Okanogan, July 25—Just four days remain for Okanogan County drivers to make application for new drivers' licenses, Don Huber, patrolman, reminded them today.

Often it is *the most recent angle* of the news that is played up in the lead. This is particularly true if it is a follow-up story, after

one or more earlier stories, dealing with the same event, have appeared in previous issues. At other times, it may be the *local angle*. If a story coming in over the wire contains the name of a local person, or reference to something local, it will probably be rewritten by an editor to play up this angle. A county agricultural agent who gets information or news material from the state office in form of news stories can usually rewrite this to make it a local story. Such a rewriting adds to its news value. State extension editors realize this and frequently send out such releases, leaving blank the name of the county and the agent, who can fill these in before turning the copy over to a local paper.

The following leads illustrate the writing of leads as suggested above:

With an estimated 50 to 60 percent of the apple crop in Lake County lying on the ground as the result of Thursday's windstorm, apple growers were taking steps to enlist the aid of fruit dealers and the Federal Surplus Marketing Administration in purchasing and storing windfallen apples, Herman Mantle, secretary of the Ohio State Apple Institute, said today.

Increasing violence in the apricot price war between growers and canners today brought an appeal for additional help from . . .

A new system of alarming the White Hall-Hereford countryside was tried last night whereby cooperation among police, firemen, telephone operators and vigilante farmers may help curb the wave of incendiary barn fires which have swept the area for the past two years.

Increases in retail milk, cream and buttermilk prices in Rochester next Wednesday were predicted today as the State Department of Agriculture announced 99.2 percent of area producers had approved boosts in their returns in a mail referendum.

Houston, Sept. 24 (AP)—Refugees by the thousands returned tonight to the Gulf Coast homes from which they fled to escape a tropical storm which caused millions of dollars of damage to crops and property.

Chicago, Ill.—Iowa corn is being moved from state elevators for export to Great Britain under the lend-lease act. (Story in *Des Moines Register*.)

Grammar and the leads: The fact that a great variety of sentence forms is available may escape the reporter's atten-

tion unless he gives it particular thought. The lead may begin with a noun or with an adjective or adverb modifier carrying the emphasis. It may begin with the subject of the main clause that carries modifying dependent clauses. It may be a simple sentence with modifiers or it may be a compound sentence. It may begin with a prepositional phrase or with present or past participial construction. The opening may be an infinitive, or it may be one of many types of subordinate clauses. Without attempting to label each one specifically, here are a number of leads selected to show how a skillful reporter may secure variety in lead writing by means of varied grammatical construction:

Denton, Md., Sept. 24 (AP)—Construction of new rural electrification projects by the Choptank Cooperative, Inc., is being delayed by lack of materials, W. R. Merrikin, cooperative attorney, announced after a meeting of company officials yesterday.

Skimmed milk, previously restricted by law to certain manufacturing uses, will be allowed to be sold to home consumers in New York City beginning Jan. 1, the city Board of Health decided yesterday.

With harvesting practically finished in the Salt River Valley, price increases are reported for both oranges and grapefruit, according to the Arizona Citrus Exchange.

Waynesburg, Pa., Sept. 16—For the first time in several years, a large portion of the corn crop in Greene County has been cut by mid-September.

Corona, Calif., June 20—With heavy hearts and cherished memories, many of the pioneer families of this district are abandoning their homes to make way for the building of Prado Dam and its reservoir, covering several thousand acres of fertile farm land. Orange County and the Federal government will take control of this property.

Its commencement exercises literally washed out of the stadium by a deluging rain early last evening, Ohio State University, after a valiant attempt to "carry on" in the covered area beneath the tiers of seats, had to call the whole thing off and announce that for the first time in its history, graduates will get their diplomas by mail.

Rushing in from the West, high winds laden with sand swept through Rochester and western New York yesterday, knocking down trees, pulling down poles and high tension wires and smashing windows.

Because black is so important, the smartest day dresses are the little black numbers with schoolgirl quaintness, relieved by meticulous touches of white.

If war comes to Iowa, she'll have at least 30 men who can build bomb shelters and conduct blackouts.

Syracuse, N. Y. (AP)—Asked to express their menu preferences, 400 boys and girls invited to a rescue mission Thanksgiving dinner voted this way: for turkey—10 percent; for spaghetti—11 percent; various—four percent; and for hot dogs—75 percent.

Solving the problem of aircraft stress and strain is one of the latest uses scientists have found for soap bubbles. Prof. H. W. Marsh of the University of Wisconsin mathematics department and G. W. Traynor, now chief of the forest products division of the national forestry service, have successfully used soap bubbles in determining the twist resistance of all kinds and shapes of airplane wing beams.

San Francisco, Nov. 15—As a result of the vast national defense industries now located in the state, California is on the receiving end of the largest migration of job seekers in the history of the state.

A quotation, either direct or indirect, is often used as a feature in writing a lead for meeting or interview stories. The quotation is also a device that lends itself to writing other than summary leads, such as suspended interest types. The reporter should be careful, however, to make sure that the fact or statement quoted is of sufficient importance to justify its being so used. An inexperienced reporter is sometimes inclined to overwork quotations as leads. Here are a few good examples:

"It is not real batter bread unless you scald the meal," says Mrs. Emma Speed Sampson, who deplores the reflection cast on Southern cooking by those who seek short cuts to success with their ancestors' recipes.

"What can I do to get rid of boxelder bugs in my home?" is a question often asked extension entomologists at Iowa State College.

"Dinner's cold now, John!" won't be a reproach to tardy spouses in the housekeeping of the future, says Science Service. It will mean merely that dinner isn't ready yet, that it is still frozen solid, and has been that way since it was prepared, perhaps months before. This is one of the interesting possibilities of the frozen pack method, as visioned by a woman pioneer in food refrigeration . . .

Norman, Okla. (UP)—It is not romantic to say good night to a girl friend to the blast of a steam whistle, according to Walter Kraft, University of Oklahoma director of utilities, and he is going to do something about it.

Corning, Ia.—“There are no bottle-necks in agricultural production, and farmers should not be branded as unpatriotic or selfish if they demand equality with industry and labor which are guaranteed profitable incomes in the production of guns and ammunition,” said Mark Thornburg, secretary of agriculture, at the annual meeting of the Adams County Farm Bureau Thursday night.

Student reporters are oftentimes inclined to use questions as leads for their stories, but it is only occasionally that a question lead is justified. At times it may be good. A few examples are given here:

What are the women of Illinois talking about?

If the replies of several hundred women in attendance at a reception given this week in Urbana are indicative of the trend over the state, they are discussing many subjects, most of them serious, others of lighter vein.

Owasso, Mich., March 29—Is a fox hunt, hunting?

That is the question that is causing no end of debate in Shiawassee County, which is closed to Sunday hunting.

Statesboro, Ga., Jan. 13—Where do they come from, and will the supply never be exhausted? These are questions asked here each week as the two weekly livestock auctions report unusually large sales of both hogs and cattle.

Big fact or cartridge lead: While a summary lead is the first and most important kind of news lead, another effective lead is one that might be called a “single big fact” or a “cartridge” lead. When the feature of a story is of outstanding interest or importance, especially when it deals with the consummation of events for which people have been waiting, the cartridge lead can frequently be employed with success. This lead consists of a brief statement of the feature of the story in the first sentence and the giving of the other details of the summary in a second sentence. Often the first sentence containing the feature is also set off by itself as a paragraph.

The effect of this lead as compared with the clothesline lead, of which it is merely an adaptation, is to give greater emphasis to the feature. Consider the following:

Alberta Hoppe, 15, whose home is four miles south of Cedar Rapids, is the healthiest 4-H club girl in Iowa.

Alberta won this distinction last night in competition with 69 other club girls, champions of as many counties, in the state 4-H club health contest at the Iowa State Fair.

If this lead is compared with the clothesline lead above we see that it has quite a different effect. It has brought the single outstanding feature of the story into the very center of the limelight, thus giving it a heightened value. The summary, however, is not dispensed with. It follows the feature immediately.

This type of lead is more frequently used on what are known as *second day stories* than on *first day stories*.

A story which gives a first account of an event to the readers, which deals for the first time with an event and the actors in it, is called a first day story. The farm page editor hears that Sam Green has sold his farm or that a fire destroyed his barn, or that he is to hold a livestock sale. The account of any of these events would be a first day story. A follow-up on any of these stories in a subsequent issue would be a second day story.

The cartridge lead is often used in a second day story because it presumes to a certain extent, in its first sentence, upon the reader's having some knowledge of the events to which reference is made. Without this knowledge the first sentence, bare of the details of the summary, would not be intelligible to the reader. For the same reason this kind of lead is usually used only on fairly important stories, with the events of which the readers are likely to have some familiarity. The cartridge lends itself also to the use of leads of the suspended interest type. It will be found in some of the examples which follow:

St. Louis, Mo., June 11—Will 41,518,125,000 tons of water backed up into Lake Mead by Boulder Dam cause earthquakes?

This question was raised before a meeting of the Seismological Society of America today by R. R. Bodle of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Washington, D. C., April 29—Drought years are nearly at an end for the United States. They will not return until 1975.

Such is the forecast of Dr. Charles G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, made here today before the meeting of the American Geophysical Union.

Washington, D. C.—Twins don't stay alike if they don't stay together.

This is the general conclusion derived from a study of many pairs of twins, both identical and nonidentical, by a three-man research team at the University of Chicago, representing the sciences of biology, psychology and statistics.

Minnesota's public rat No. 1 is operating a slot machine at the state university, but it's perfectly legal.

The culprit is Pliny, a white rat which is in the slot machine business only to obtain enough food to keep fat and glossy and to please B. Frederick Skinner, instructor in psychology.

"No," Grace said right away, "I've never milked a cow."

Austin, Tex., Dec. 2 (UP)—Dr. C. C. Albers, University of Texas professor, grows weeds in his garden here.

This is the story of a reporter, a policeman and Fred Astaire.

Perry, N. Y., Feb. 1 (AP)—They're making butter in electric washing machines now.

Farm manure is worth \$1.97 per ton when it is used as a fertilizer on Iowa soils.

This is the value assigned to it following a large number of accurate experiments carried out on 16 soil types in 43 fields scattered in every part of the state. The experiments were conducted by Iowa farmers, working in conjunction with the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station.

Sacramento, Calif., Nov. 27 (AP)—California is going on a pay-as-you-go basis. Gov. Culbert L. Olson broke the good news to taxpayers yesterday.

Last week little Jack Purdy was a pedestrian. This week he is a patient.

Grouped facts lead: There is a third general type of lead which is used mainly for a news lead but which at times is utilized for a suspended interest lead. This has several modifications. One is a modification of the cartridge lead. It consists not of a single feature played up in the opening sentence, but of two or more features of parallel importance, cast in the opening sentence, or a series of sentences, and followed as in the case of the cartridge lead with the details of the summary.

Alberta Hoppe, 15, whose home is four miles south of Cedar Rapids, is the healthiest 4-H club girl in Iowa.

And Van Kinney, 17, who hails from Davis County, is the healthiest club boy.

They won this distinction last night in competition with 88 other club girls and boys in the state 4-H club contest at the Iowa State Fair.

This kind of lead gives the writer the opportunity, when the facts of the story warrant it, to give equal emphasis to more than one feature of his story. The following leads are further illustrations of the type:

Chicago—Tuberculosis is more prevalent among college men than among college women.

It occurs more frequently among college students in the East and Far West than in the Middle West.

Dr. Esmond R. Long and Florence D. Seibert of the Henry Phipps Institute, University of Pennsylvania, report the results of the tuberculin test on 18,744 college freshmen in 1935-36 in the forthcoming issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Denver, Colo.—Death is a crystalline pattern permanently set. Life is associated with the formation and destruction of crystals. The living organism is crystalline in nature, just like the material of the nonliving world. Evolution began with the joining of basic elements to form simple compounds long before life was born on the earth.

These new ideas of life, death and evolution were presented to the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting here by Dr. George A. Baitzell, Yale biologist, as the result of X-ray studies which reveal the crystalline structure of living matter.

Washington, D. C., May 7—At least 700 mammal species now living may pass out of existence within the next century. North America, with 25 extinct forms, leads all the world in its reckless destruction of irreplaceable species.

This indictment and warning were uttered before the meeting of the American Society of Mammologists here today by Dr. Francis Harper of the American committee for international wildlife protection.

Good leafy soybean hay is an excellent feed for fattening lambs, superior in feeding value per ton to red clover hay, when fed along with a ration of corn, cottonseed meal, corn silage and salt. Soybean hay is better for fattening lambs when fed whole than when ground.

These are some of the outstanding results obtained in tests recently completed at the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station.

If a news story does not contain any *single* fact important enough to stand alone or be featured as a lead, there may be a number of interesting facts which belong together or which can be massed

at the opening of a story to create an impression. The following are examples:

Do you need a buzz saw, sausage grinder, 10 tons of crushed stone or a ton of unbaled alfalfa hay? Would you like to have a shepherd pup, a corn planter, a grindstone or tractor plow? Could you use fruits, vegetables or grain of any kind? Is your supply of chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese running low?

If so, attend the seventh annual public auction sale which will be held for the benefit of the Dublin community church, Oct. 31, and you may have a chance to get these articles at your own price—if the bidding isn't too heavy.

Marshfield, Wis., Feb. 1 (AP)—They may be heirlooms. They may be scarce. They may even be antiques in Columbus, Ohio, or Nome, Alaska, but in sections of the country where men are men, you can still find red flannel underwear.

Hollywood—Strong men stood tense, hands clenched, mouths grim. Women twirled their handkerchiefs, nervously patted at their lips, watched in awed fascination. Actress June Lang, her face a mask of almost desperate resolution, raised an arm, brought it down smartly, palm first.

Smack!

"Ouch!" yelled Shirley Temple.

They had guppies, they had alligators, they had chameleons, they had, in fact, nearly every kind of animal, bird or beast known to man that could be considered as a pet at yesterday's pet show sponsored by the Park Department in the newly completed playground at Riverside Drive and Seventy-fourth Street. But it was a quiet little family of four mongrel puppies that took the event by storm by winning the "best-in-show" honors.

Suspended interest lead: Stories whose value depends upon human interest or unusualness have a strong emotional element. It is quite natural that news stories of this kind should be written, frequently, in a manner which resembles fiction, for, as has been said, fiction has developed an effective technique for arousing emotions.

Such stories often employ a suspended interest lead. (Straight news stories which have an unusual twist, a strong human interest element, or which lend themselves to an interesting verbal handling, may also be begun with suspended interest leads.) The purpose of this lead is not to convey information to the reader in the speediest and clearest manner, but to arouse him to an emotional

reaction to the facts of the story. The writer wishes, then, not to divulge in the lead the climax of his story, as he would with the summary lead, but to intrigue the reader by a clever, striking, unusual, or dramatic beginning and from that lead him up to the climax—a fiction story in miniature.

The following examples will give the effect and the method:

Ames, Iowa—The ring-necked pheasant, king of the upland game birds, has one failing which may lower his standing in the eyes of the duck hunter. He can't keep his wife at home in the nesting season.

Waterfowl studies in northwest Iowa by Logan J. Bennett, of the United States Bureau of biological survey, and Paul L. Errington, of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, have disclosed that pheasant hens, either by design or through carelessness, sometimes lay their eggs in duck nests, thereby reducing the potential number of ducklings.

Ten thousand boys and girls writing essays. Ten thousand busy tongues asking questions. A quickening interest in the farm bureau.

That in a nutshell is the picture of the farm essay contest now going on in 27 states. One hundred and fifty-one counties are competing.

Washington, D. C., April 30—How blue is the sky?

That is not a mere rhetorical question put by a poet for the purpose of dragging his lady's eyes into the discussion. The exact color of the sky is a matter of considerable scientific, commercial and even military importance, for it is a measure of air turbidity, dust content, haziness, etc., affecting visibility at a distance, intensity and color composition of sunlight and a number of other intangible but important matters.

A new device for measuring sky blueness was described before the meeting of the American Geophysical Union here today. . . .

Kansas City, Mo., June 22—Outstanding glamor ladies of history, Cleopatra and Helen of Troy, wore sandals, not high heels.

This thought on shoe psychology was presented here this morning to the American Home Economics Association by Miss Ruth Kerr of the Calf-Tanners' Association. . . .

Carrollton, Texas, June 25—A small, spry man with black eyes and hair and a spring in his step, known to his friends as Tater Tucker, took a plunge 23 years ago when he plunked down a first payment on 300 acres of sandy land four miles northeast of Carrollton. At least so his friends believed, for Tucker at that time possessed only two things, energy and a belief in sweet potatoes as a money crop.

A sod house, a "dobie" oven built inside, of clay, which served jointly as a heating and cooking stove; dry brush and grass used as fuel; straw ticks for beds—and stewed sparrows and rye bread for food.

Green Hutchinson was a very ancient man. Maybe he was the oldest man in the United States.

If you see a huge, bewhiskered, overalled figure lumbering down the street, with a bright red bandanna handkerchief tied gypsy-fashion about his head and carrying a lantern and an old-fashioned hickory staff, don't be alarmed.

News leads fit many uses: Most of the examples of leads used as illustrations in this chapter have been taken from newspapers. Examination of straight news stories in farm, trade, and engineering papers will disclose that news writing for them is just about the same as for newspapers. Likewise, many of the short articles of experience or informational value are written with a good news lead which is likely to summarize the story or play up the essential feature first.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Clip ten summary news leads from papers or magazines. Analyze the completeness with which they answer the questions, who, what, where, why, when, and how. Discuss briefly the feature of the story and whether or not you think the writer chose his feature rightly.
2. Write a news story beginning with a summary lead. Be able to explain why you chose the feature as you did.
3. Write a news story, beginning it in four ways: with a summary lead, a cartridge lead, a grouped fact lead and a suspended interest lead. Which of the four is best in this case and why?
4. Clip out of a week's daily newspapers what you think are the three best examples each of summary, cartridge, grouped fact, and suspended interest leads, and be ready to defend your estimate of them.
5. Clip five leads that you think are poorly written. Rewrite them to make them more effective.