Introductory Leads/Sentence Starters

**Leads (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.**

1. Riddle Lead: 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.

1. Announcement Lead: 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.

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.

1. 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.

1. Definition Lead. 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.

1. Opinion Lead: 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

1. Quotation Lead 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.

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.

1. Narrative Lead: 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.

1. Figurative Language Lead: 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?

1. General Statement Lead contains 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.