

Types of Narrative Leads

Name _____

Date _____ Period _____

An effective lead makes the reader want to continue reading the story; it pulls the reader into the story and makes them start asking themselves questions about what's happening and what's going to happen next.

Descriptive Leads:	describe a character or setting
Dialogue Leads:	start with the characters talking
Thinking Leads:	get inside the mind of the character
Action Leads:	jump right in to the action or conflict for the story.

Directions: 1) Read the following leads and write what type they are in the space provided. Some of the leads may use a combination of techniques. 2) Write one question you have about the story based on what you read in the lead.

1. "Get away! Get away! Get out of here!"
She came at us, swinging something. It struck the side of the shed—there was a metallic sound—and then her screaming again.
"—out of here—I'll kill—"
The others were ahead of me. I ran, whimpering with fear.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

2. Inside the car it was quiet, the noise of the engine even and subdued, the air just the right temperature, the windows tight-fitting. The boy sat on the back seat, a box of chocolates, unopened, beside him, and a comic, folded. The trim Sussex landscape flowed past the windows: cows, white-fenced fields, highly-priced period houses.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

3. My mother was making me a dress. All through the month of November I would come home from school and find her in the kitchen, surrounded by cut-up red velvet and scraps of tissue- paper pattern. She worked at an old treadle machine pushed up against the window to get the light, and also to let her look out, past the stubble fields and bare vegetable garden, to see who went by on the road. There was seldom anybody to see.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

4. A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

5. Dr. Khanna believed that he was easily the most outstanding immigrant physicist at the University of Wisconsin. Personally, he considered himself to be the finest of all physicists, immigrant or native. He was also, in his opinion, among the dozen or so best-dressed men on the campus.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

6. One day Miss Smith asked James what a baby horse was called and James couldn't remember. He blinked and shook his head. He knew, he explained, but he just couldn't remember.

Miss Smith said, "Well, well, James Machen doesn't know what a baby horse is called." She said it very loudly so that everyone in the classroom heard.

James became very confused. He blinked and said, "Pony, Miss Smith?"

"Pony! James Machen says a baby horse is a pony! Hands up everyone who knows what a baby horse is." All the right arms in the room, except James's and Miss Smith's, shot upwards. Miss Smith smiled at James.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

7. Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet. Hardly had she brought one gentleman into the little pantry behind the office on the ground floor and helped him off with his overcoat than the wheezy hall-door bell clanged again and she had to scamper along the bare hallway to let in another guest. It was well for her that she did not have to attend to the ladies also. But Miss Kate and Miss Julia had thought of that and had converted the bathroom upstairs into a ladies' dressing-room. Miss Kate and Miss Julia were there, gossiping and laughing and fussing, walking after each other to the head of the stairs, peering down over the banisters and calling down to Lily to ask her who had come.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

8. A telegram arrived out of the blue. Come for the weekend, Hubert's message read, and I remember the excitement I felt because I valued his friendship more than anyone else's. I had no money for the train journey and had to raise the matter with my father. "It's hard to come by these days," my father said, giving me only what he could easily spare. I increased it playing rummy with McCaddy the courthouse clerk, who had a passion for the game.

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

9. Now that the boys are grown up and Rob is dead, Lois has moved to a condominium apartment in one of the newer waterfront developments. She is relieved not to have to worry about the lawn, or about the ivy pushing its muscular little suckers into the brickwork, or the squirrels gnawing their way into the attic...

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____

10. "You must not tell anyone," my mother said, "what I am about to tell you."

Type of lead: _____

Question: _____