

Writing the Lead

Communications & Media

One sentence that carries the news and earns the second sentence.

A hard news lead states what is new, to whom, and why it matters, in one readable sentence.

New fact + who it affects + why now

Buried lead

Find the news

Move it to line one

Two ideas in one

One idea

Split the sentence

Starts with a body

Not the process

Start with the news

THE COMMON MISTAKE

✗ **The council met on Tuesday to discuss the budget**

✓ **The council cut library hours by a third on Tuesday**

Meetings are not news; decisions are. Lead with the outcome and its effect, and put the meeting into the second paragraph.

Aim for under about 30 words. If the lead needs a semicolon, it is holding two stories.