

# Checklist for Writing Leads

- Is it specific (rather than vague or abstract)?
- Is it concise? (No more than 3 lines typed)
- Does it begin with the news? (If you began with the time and place it occurred, rewrite it!)
- Does it emphasize the most interesting and important aspect of the story--the main thing that happened?
- If it originated in a distant city, did you begin with a dateline?
- Have you used a relatively simple sentence structure, avoiding a long beginning clause or phrase?
- Has it been localized?
- If you used a question, is it short, simple and provocative?
- If you used a quotation, does it adequately summarize the story?
- Does your lead state or suggest the story's importance and its impact on your readers?
- Have you double-checked all facts in your lead to be sure they are correct, and not exaggerated or inaccurate?