**LEADS**

**Many experts agree that the most important aspect of any story is the intro, or the lead. The lead is what sets the tone, the pace, the feeling in the story. Now that you have a first draft of your piece and have revised it some, what is your next step? How will you draw your reader in? How will you make you someone *want* to read your piece?**

**Authors use numerous techniques to begin to their writing. I’ve listed on this worksheet, a variety of tried-and-true methods to help you revise your lead.**

**Here is my original lead:**

The day started out like any other day at the cottage. I grabbed my new ten-speed bike and started peddling down the street to my friend Amy’s cottage.

There’s nothing particularly wrong with these two sentences, except that they certainly do not capture the reader’s imagination or attention. Pay close attention to how I use some of the tried-and-true methods to radically revise my lead.

#### Question

What could possibly be sweeter than watching the orange sun rise over Lake Daily, its citrus rays permeating my light cotton t-shirt and giving my ten-year-old legs energy to peddle as quickly as possible up the dusty road to Amy’s cottage? Little did I know that this sweet, perfect, every-day-sort-of morning would be a morning I would never forget.

**Dialogue**

*“I’m leaving, Mom!” I shouted lightheartedly through the wooden screen door, right before it banged shut behind me.*

*My mom responded with her standard Mom Response. “Be careful, Honey! Watch for cars and be home in time for lunch!” Her words became tangled in the spokes of my ten-speed bicycle, as I sped off down the sun-soaked dirt road on my way to Amy’s cottage.*

#### Action

*Speeding down the sun-soaked dirt road, my legs peddled faster than the ripples on the surface of Lake Daily. Dust coated my handlebars. Sand gathered in the corners of my eyes, causing salty tears to form and dry before they could do their job of rinsing away the granules of sand.*

#### Snapshot (taking a picture and describing the detail)

*The orange sun rises over the soft rippling water of Lake Daily, casting a warm citrus glow over everything in range. My new red ten-speed bike, propped up effortlessly by its sturdy kickstand, looks shinier than usual against the warm horizon. The black foam-covered, curled handlebars are glistening with flecks of remaining dew. It is a morning I’ll never forget…for many reasons.*

#### Thoughtshot (describe what you, the character, is thinking)

*“All is right with the world,” I think to myself as I watch the sweet orange sun rise slowly over the rippled surface of Lake Daily. “ It usually takes ten minutes to bike to Amy’s cottage, but I bet with my new ten-speed, I can make it in five.” I hopped effortlessly aboard my new wheels and began peddling with great fervor.*

#### Fragment for Effect

*Sun rising slowly. A warm glow cast on everything. A new red ten-speed calling me to go faster and faster. It was a morning I would never forget.*

**Important Reminders:**

* Your attention getter begins your introduction.
* Your thesis is the last sentence in your introduction.
* Each of the body paragraphs should have a topic sentence.
* The novel and films are major works. Either underline the titles or *italicize* them, but keep your punctuation choice consistent.
* Follow MLA format!!
* Incorporate your quote into a sentence you have created. Example: George demonstrates his frustration with Lennie’s childish ways when he, “stood up and threw the mouse as far as could into the darkening bush” (Steinbeck, 9).
* When using in-text citation, use the author’s name followed by a comma then the page number. This information goes inside parenthesis and is followed by a period.
* Only place parenthetical information at the END of a sentence. Never in the middle.
* Your quotes should not go longer than three lines of text on your typed page. If this happens, see me regarding format of block quotes.
* Do not use any personal pronouns. (I, me, my, we, us, myself, etc.) Unless you are directly quoting the literature. Personal pronouns are strictly prohibited.
* DO NOT ADDRESS THE READER. (DO NOT USE “YOU!” “US,” WE,” etc.)
* Do not start sentences with “**There** + are, is, was, were, may be, might be, could be, should be, will be, etc.”
* Avoid dead words. (a lot, very, get, stuff, thing, have to, well, etc.) (The words ‘this, that, these, those, and it” should be used sparingly.)
* Use the present tense, not the past tense, when discussing literature and film.
* Choose active verbs over the “to be” verb. Use vivid adjectives and adverbs to lend voice and character to your essay.

**Possible Attention Getters:**

1. relevant quote from an outside source

2. relevant quote from the story

3. startling fact or creative description of event

4. shocking or amusing generalization