

Writing Effective Leads

All of the following leads are possibilities to begin a memoir about the relationship between the writer and his/her favorite blanket. Having a variety of leads and of strategies for writing leads gives you tools for your writing toolbox. After writing the options, you'll naturally choose the best one.

Choose a topic. Try different leads for this same topic. Write an example of the following types of leads for your topic. Which is the most effective and why?

THE DRAMATIC LEAD

Example: I wouldn't make it through the night without it.

STARTING IN THE MIDDLE OF A SCENE

Example: I was sure we'd find the blanket ripped and dirty.

LEISURELY LEAD

Example: When I looked into my Grandma's linen closet, I was amazed by the patchwork of color. Never had I seen so many different blankets. There were soft, fluffy chenille ones and old worn brown ones. Some were still in their clear plastic wrap, while others seemed to sag off the edge of the shelf. Tucked in the middle, barely visible, with just a faded yellow corner sticking out, was the one I wanted.

BEGINNING AT THE ENDING

Example: I joyfully pulled the tattered corners around me and sighed as I settled into the corner of the chair.

INTRODUCING THE NARRATOR

Example: I used to think I was different from everyone else – that I had a secret friend that no one else had. But, as I've grown older and shared childhood memories with new friends, I've come to realize that lots of people had special relationships with inanimate objects. You know that special bear, t-shirt, pillow or in my case, blanket? Yes, I admit it. I had a "blankie." Did you?

THE MISLEADING LEAD

Example: "Only insecure, immature baby's need to drag their blankets around with them!"