

## Chapter 9 Journalism Today

### Alternative Leads

- Journalists emit at least a dozen variations of soft leads, but most begin with a story's most interesting details (anecdote, description, quotation or question)
- Stories with soft leads, which may run four or five paragraphs, usually have a nut paragraph
- Nut Graph - States the central point of the story and serves some of the same functions as the summary news lead; states the central point of the story
- Summary leads are more common than alternative leads

### Criticisms

- The more literary style of soft leads also may help traditional print versions of newspapers compete with television
- Critics call the use of alternative leads "Jell-O Journalism"

### "Buried" or "Delayed" Leads

- A "buried" lead is the most common type of alternative lead
- A buried lead begins with an interesting example or anecdote that sets a story's theme.
- Buried lead often followed by a nut graph
- The delayed lead can introduce a complex or abstract problem by showing how the problem affects a single individual

### Multiparagraph Leads

- Other writers think of a lead as a unit of thought

### Using Quotations

- Reporters often avoid using quotations in leads
- Sources generally do not provide quotes that meet three criteria for leads
  - They summarize the entire story
  - They are brief
  - They are self-explanatory
- Leads using a quotation often can be rewritten with a brief introduction to enhance clarity

### Using Questions

- Questions can make effective leads
- To be effective, question leads must be brief, simple, specific and provocative
- Readers should feel compelled to answer it
- A question should concern a controversial issue that readers are familiar with and that interests and affects them

### Suspenseful Leads

- Soe reporters write leads to create suspense, arouse readers' curiosity or raise a question in their minds

### Descriptive Leads

- Other leads begin with descriptive details that paint a picture for the reader before moving gradually into the action
- The description should be colorful and interesting so that it arouses readers' interest

### Shockers - Leads with a Twist

- Shockers - Startling leads that immediately capture the attention of readers

### Ironic Leads

- Leads that present a startling or ironic contrast

### Direct-Address Leads

- Reporters will occasionally speak directly to their readers

### Words Used in Unusual Ways

- Must have a good grasp of the term