

LESSON ON LEADS

Learning goals:

At the end of this lesson we will...

- understand how authors use different kinds of leads to set the mood for their stories.
- be able to use different kinds of leads to set the mood for our own stories.
 - Types of leads: action, setting, dialogue, important fact, or a combination

Materials:

- Learning goal posted
- Smart Board or projection screen for viewing the Dean Jacobs website
- Writer's Notebooks or other writing paper
- Pencils

Lesson sequence:

1. Present and discuss the learning goals, including the different types of leads.
2. Discuss how they have all started their stories so have already written a lead. Emphasize that one way we can improve our writing is by studying the work of authors and applying their techniques to our own writing.
3. Remind students of the many different "Backyard stories" Dean Jacobs wrote. Show the list of all his articles on the Travel4life website. To access this list:
 - Click on: Newspaper Columns
 - Click on the section: *A Walk Across Dodge County*
4. Pull up certain articles one at a time (see list below). With each one, highlight the lead of the story and read it to the students or have them read it silently.
5. Have students think about which kind of lead Dean has used and write it on a piece of paper. Then have students hold up their piece of paper to show their thinking.
6. Call on a few students to share their thinking about which type of lead Dean used to set the mood for his story.
7. Ask a student volunteer to share a lead they have written with the class. Write this lead on the Smart Board or overhead. Have the rest of the class decide which kind of lead it is, then give suggestions on revising the lead to help set the tone for this piece of writing.
8. Give students time to write three different types of leads for their "Backyard Story".

Articles and leads to use from the deanjacobs.org website:

| Article | Lead | Type of Lead |
|--|---|--|
| My New Journey is to Explore my Own Backyard, Dodge County - July 21, 2008 | <p>“Tray tables up, seats in the upright position,” said the voice over the intercom. Normally when I fly, my seat is positioned on the aisle. It’s a challenge sitting still at times, and this gives me easy access to get up and move.</p> <p>But this day all the aisle seats were booked, so the next best option was to plop down next to the window.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dialogue○ Setting |
| Welcome to Hooper - August 18, 2008 | <p>The gray clouds kept the heat of the morning sun at bay as I stepped out of my red truck and into the Hooper Cemetery on the south side of town. I had never entered Hooper from the south.</p> <p>For years and countless trips down U.S. Highway 275, I had zipped through the town of 827 residents during the time I attended Wayne State College. It felt strange to me to enter the town from the south. The new bypass had changed the once familiar route.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Setting○ Action○ Dialogue |
| Welcome to Winslow - September 8, 2008 | <p>Stepping out of my red truck in the Winslow Village Park, a line from the movie “Shrek” popped into my head. “It’s quiet here, too quiet.”</p> | |
| North Bend Residents Share What They Love About Their Community - September 22, 2008 | <p>Gray skies over North Bend warned of impending rain as I parked my red truck on the west end of town.</p> <p>I chuckled as I glanced at the corner street sign, Seventh Street and Dean Avenue. Like the famous Marg Helgenberger from North Bend who had a street named after her, I had my own avenue in town.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Setting○ Setting○ Action |
| It’s a Large Town, But With a Small-Town Atmosphere - September 29, 2008 | <p>At 10:15 a.m. I parked my red truck in the parking lot at Christensen Field on the west side of town.</p> <p>Fremont is the largest community in Dodge County with its approximate 25,000 residents. No other town in the county even</p> | |

comes close to it in size; this offers a challenge to walk from one side to the other. Choices like what route to take or where to stop bothered me. I knew it would not be possible to go everywhere.

Follow-up:

Have students partner up to share one of their leads. Encourage them to feedback to their partners on how to revise the lead to make it even better.

Or:

Share a few great leads that students have written and discuss what makes it such a great lead for setting the mood for the story.