

### *Say Something Meaningful*

The lead must contribute to the telling of the story—including why the audience should care. That a meeting took place is rarely news. Don't start the lead with it:

**AWFUL:** At its monthly meeting tonight, the city council. . . .

It might be news if the council *didn't* meet, but sheer existence is rarely news. The lead should say something the council did that made the meeting sufficiently significant to justify air time.

**BETTER:** Good news for city workers. The city council tonight approved a five percent pay raise. . . .

### *Keep It Simple*

Although all broadcast stories must answer the basic questions of *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how*—don't try to answer them all in the lead. You can't have more than one important thought or idea per sentence. Look for noncritical information that can wait until later in the story. Otherwise, you have the all-too-common overloaded lead. Break up the information.

**OVERLOADED:** Five people are being treated for smoke inhalation today after a two-alarm fire blamed on faulty wiring at a small office building on the south side.

**BETTER:** Five people are being treated for smoke inhalation today after a two-alarm fire on the south side. Officials say faulty wiring at a small office building. . . .