

**OVERLOADED:** Thousands of Detroit students and school teachers are waiting in limbo on the outcome of negotiations between building engineers and school officials.

In addition to being overloaded, the sentence understates numbers and improperly shifts the focus of the story.

**BETTER:** Tens of thousands of Detroit students and teachers are waiting to see whether there's school tomorrow.

### *Be Direct and to the Point*

Don't back into a story. Say off the top what the story is about.

**BACKING IN:** An interesting thing happened at the city council meeting last night.

**BETTER:** The city council last night voted to close all city recreation areas.

or

All city recreation areas will be closing down. The city council last night voted. . . .

or

The city plans to close all its recreation areas. . . .

**BACKING IN:** A home-made single engine plane crashed nose-first into some Delaware farm land today. It exploded into flames, and the