

Start with New News

Don't start the lead with a part of the story that isn't *new* news. Don't start with history or background. That's not why the story is on the air *now*.

OLD NEWS: A district court judge found a local man guilty of murder two weeks ago. Today John Smith was sentenced to. . . .

NEW NEWS: A local man was sentenced to. . . . (then you can talk about the trial and the crime)

OLD NEWS: The Coast Guard rescued two men from the freezing waters off Point Falcon last night.

NEW NEWS: Two men are hospitalized in good condition today -- after the Coast Guard pulled the pair from the freezing waters off Point Falcon last night.

Don't reminisce. Don't start a story with a phrase like *You may remember* . . . followed inevitably by a recap of the earlier story. Some of the audience will remember, most will probably not—either because it didn't make that much of an impression or they didn't see it at all. Regardless, you still have to recap, so why start the story with a weak lead that simply asks the audience to try to remember old news? Instead, work harder to come up with a strong lead for today's story, and then note that it's a follow-up with a phrase like *We first told you about* . . . If that doesn't work, you're still better off with:

A follow-up tonight to a story we first told you about. . . .

At least that says at the top that the audience is going to learn something new, and follow-up stories appeal to people.

Save the Name for Later

Unless the person the story is about is extremely well-known (like the president), or you're using a delayed lead, don't include the name in the lead.