

# Lesson Plan: Crafting the Perfect Hook

## Mastering Journalistic Leads and the Power of Truth

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### Materials Needed:

- Notebook and pen/pencil for Naranjoniks
  - Whiteboard or large sheet of paper
  - Colored markers
  - Timer (phone or kitchen timer)
  - Three pre-written story prompts (see Independent Practice section)
  - "The Truth Compass" worksheet (a simple sheet with a compass graphic and the question below)
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### I. Learning Objectives (5 Minutes)

By the end of this lesson, Naranjoniks will be able to:

1. Clearly define and identify three types of journalistic leads: Summary, Anecdotal, and Question.
2. Write an original example of each type of lead for a given story idea.
3. Analyze which type of lead is most effective for different kinds of stories.
4. Apply the value of "truth" by ensuring each lead accurately represents the core of the story without misleading the reader.

### II. Introduction: The "First Impression" Game (10 Minutes)

**Teacher:** "Hello, Naranjoniks! Every great story needs a great beginning. That first sentence is like a doorway; it has to make you want to walk through it. Today, we're going to become architects of those doorways. But first, a quick challenge."

"I'm going to read you three different beginnings to the same story. Your job is to listen carefully and guess what the story is about."

- **Lead #1:** "A new community garden, funded by a city-wide green initiative, officially opened on Saturday, providing local residents with 50 plots for growing their own produce."
- **Lead #2:** "For the first time in ten years, 8-year-old Maya bit into a fresh tomato she had grown herself, her face lighting up with a smile that was brighter than the summer sun."
- **Lead #3:** "What if you could fight pollution, build community, and eat healthier all at the same time?"

### Discussion:

- "What do you think the story is about?" (A new community garden)
- "Which lead made you the most curious to read more? Why?"
- "Which one gave you the most facts? Which one made you feel something?"

**Teacher:** "Excellent! You've just experienced the power of the three main types of leads we're exploring today. Let's quickly review them."

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### III. Guided Instruction & The Value of Truth (15 Minutes)

**1. Review the Three Leads:** On the whiteboard, create three columns: **Summary**, **Anecdotal**, and **Question**. Briefly review the definitions you've already discussed, writing down key phrases for each.

- **Summary:** The 5 Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why), Just the facts, Direct.
- **Anecdotal:** A small story, A single person/scene, Emotional, Human connection.
- **Question:** Makes you think, Creates curiosity, Invites the reader in.

#### 2. Introduce "The Truth Compass":

**Teacher:** "Now for the most important rule in our writer's toolkit. No matter which type of lead we choose, it must always point true. A great hook is powerful, but it's only good if it's honest. A lead that tricks the reader is a broken promise."

"We will use a 'Truth Compass' for our writing today. A lead is 'true' if it honestly reflects the main point of the story. An anecdotal lead might focus on one person's emotion, but that emotion must be representative of the larger story. A question lead can be creative, but it can't suggest an answer the story doesn't deliver."

#### 3. Guided Practice Together:

**Teacher:** "Let's practice together. Here is a simple, factual event: **'The local library received a donation of 1,000 books from a retired school teacher.'**"

- **"Naranjoniks, how would we write a Summary Lead for this?** Let's find the 5 Ws." (e.g., "A retired teacher donated 1,000 books to the Oakwood Public Library on Tuesday to help foster a love of reading in the community.")
- **"Great! Now for an Anecdotal Lead.** Let's imagine a scene. Maybe the teacher? Or a child finding a book?" (e.g., "After 40 years of teaching, Maria Sanchez couldn't bear to see her classroom library collect dust. So, she packed every single book into her car and gave them a new home.")
- **"Fantastic. Finally, a Question Lead.** How can we make the reader curious about this donation?" (e.g., "How many lives can a single book change? A local teacher is aiming to find out, one thousand times over.")

**Truth Compass Check:** "Do all three of our leads honestly represent the story? Yes! They each just open a different door into it."

### IV. Independent Practice: "Lead Writer for a Day" Challenge (20 minutes)

**Teacher:** "Alright, Naranjoniks, you're the lead writer now. I'm going to give you three different story assignments. For each one, your mission is to write one Summary Lead, one Anecdotal Lead, AND one Question Lead. Set your timer for 5-6 minutes per story."

"After writing the three leads for a story, you will use your 'Truth Compass' worksheet to answer this one question for your favorite lead of the three: *'How does this lead honestly represent the core of the story without misleading the reader?'*"

#### Story Prompts:

1. **The Event:** A 12-year-old local student wins the national spelling bee. The winning word was "serendipity."
2. **The Situation:** Scientists have discovered that honeybees can be trained to detect certain illnesses in humans by smell.

3. **The Problem:** The old town clock, which hasn't worked in 20 years, is finally being repaired thanks to community donations.

## V. Sharing, Assessment, and Reflection (10 Minutes)

**Teacher:** "Time's up! Let's hear what you've created. For each story, please share your favorite lead and tell me why you chose it. Then, read your 'Truth Compass' reflection for that lead."

### Discussion during sharing:

- Which lead type felt most natural for the spelling bee story? Why?
- Did the anecdotal or question lead feel more powerful for the honeybee story?
- How did using a story about a person (anecdotal lead) help with the town clock story?

### Assessment is based on:

- **Application:** Did Naranjoniks correctly write each of the three lead types?
- **Creativity:** Were the leads engaging and well-written?
- **Reflection:** Does the "Truth Compass" answer show an understanding of journalistic integrity?

## VI. Conclusion (5 Minutes)

**Teacher:** "Incredible work today, Naranjoniks! You've shown that you can not only identify the different tools for starting a story but you can use them creatively and, most importantly, truthfully. The lead you choose shapes how a reader feels and thinks before they even get to the main facts."

Your 'homework' is just this: As you read things online or in books this week, notice the very first sentence. Is it a summary, an anecdote, or a question? See if you can spot them in the wild!"