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## Don't bury the lede

**Technical writing is an inverse pyramid since the important part is at the top.**



Good technical writing makes its points first and then goes on to justify them. Drama writing is fine for murder mysteries, but you should never hold a technical reader in suspense.

The first sentence of an article is so important it has a name. Its called the lede sentence. It is the first sentence in the lede graf, the first paragraph. If at all possible, that first lede sentence should state what you are talking about as well as any conclusions you are trying to make. The lede paragraphs should touch on all the important points. The rest of the article can go on to support your contentions.

Starting out strong is called inverse-pyramid writing. The big important basis of the article is at the top. The finer points come last, at the bottom. This is not just an expedient of the print newspaper days, when editors would just lop off the last part of a story so it fit the column inches that were available. It is an important principle because it is a reflection of the respect you have for the reader.

You may have a friend that tells shaggy-dog stories. These are stories that go on and on, full of tangents and irrelevant facts. This is because your friend is not trying to tell a story. A good story is for the listener's benefit, not the teller's. He is an attention whore trying to dominate the conversation. If you give him one little opening to talk he will ramble on for hours. It does not concern him that sermons are for church and there is absolutely no conversation going on, no exchange of ideas. Your friend might be doing this for a variety of reasons. He may be a simple narcissist that likes to hear his own voice. He may be trying to be an alpha male, the dominant one that does most of the talking. Most likely he is just a stupid inconsiderate pig with no social skills. You should not make your writing a shaggy dog story.

So the cool-guy journalism expression "bury the lede" means the main or salient points are buried under a ton of semi-relevant verbiage. Don't you hate me for waiting until the last paragraph to tell you? Now don't you make that same mistake.