**Feature Leads vs. Hard News Leads**

Hard news leads put all the important information into the first paragraph, known as the lead. This usually includes the who, what, where, when and why of the story.

**Example:**

One person was killed and three injured when a car and truck collided yesterday on an icy section of Street Road in Bensalem, police said.

**WHO:** ONE DEAD, THREE HURT  
**WHAT:** CAR-TRUCK CRASH  
**WHERE:** STREET ROAD IN BENSELAM  
**WHEN:** YESTERDAY  
**WHY:** APPARENTLY DUE TO ICE

Feature leads, also called delayed leads, don’t have to get all the important points into the first graf. Feature articles can take several graf, usually no more than three or four, to lead the reader into the story, through the use of description, anecdote or by setting a scene.

Then, once that description or anecdote has been established, the reporter writes what’s called the nut graf. In the nut graf you explain what the story is about. In other words, the nut graf is the lead of your feature article.

**Example:**

After several days in solitary confinement, Mohamed Rifaey finally found relief in pain. He would wrap his head in a towel and whack it against the cinder-block wall. Over and over.
"I'm going to lose my mind," Rifaey recalls thinking. "I begged them: Charge me with something, with anything! Just let me out to be with people."

The illegal alien from Egypt, now finishing his fourth month in custody in York County, Pa., is among hundreds of people caught on the wrong side of the domestic war on terrorism.

In interviews with The Inquirer inside and out of jail, several men described long detentions on minimal or no charges, unusually stiff bond orders, and no allegations of terrorism. Their tales have worried civil libertarians and immigration advocates.

The first two grafs lead the reader into the story by describing the plight of one particular prisoner. The next two grafs explain what the story is about - not just the plight of one man but hundreds.

Feature articles in newspapers usually must get to the nut graf in no more than three or four paragraphs. Magazine articles, being generally longer than newspaper stories, can have much longer delayed leads. In other words, they can take longer to get to the nut graf.

Hard news leads are generally used for breaking news, deadline-oriented stories. Feature leads can be used for more featurey-type articles that don't deal with a breaking news event.

For instance, it probably wouldn't be appropriate to put a feature lead on a breaking news story about five people being killed in a rowhouse fire. On the other hand, if you were doing a follow-up story about the problems rowhouse tenants have had in getting their landlord to remove fire hazards, a feature lead would probably work well.
Generally, feature stories are a combination of a number of elements:

anecdotes - stories

description - setting the scene, describing the person

action - showing people doing things

quotes - the more colorful and interesting, the better

background info - the five Ws and the H - all the info you need to fill in the blanks

context, perspective - giving the bigger picture when necessary

point of view - sometimes in feature writing, you can let the reader know what you think

and most importantly, the angle - what is the story about? what is its point? why should people want to read your story?

From Bucks Community College