

LEADS ASSIGNMENT

Using the information provided, write a lead for each exercise. As noted in class, leads should not be longer than 35 words and should begin with the most important information.

Do not start with the day or place or names, unless the person is a public figure. Be sure to thoroughly rewrite the information. Of course, quotes should be used as written. Attribution is important. It allows readers to know the source of the information. Finally, some of the exercises have spelling errors.

Exercise One:

The Department of Veterans Affairs today admitted that its made a little mistake. The mistake cost an estimated \$5.7 million a year. Each year, the Veterans Affairs Department pays more than \$14.7 billion in disability compensation and pension benefits to more than 2.8 million veterans and to nearly 1 million surviving spouses and other dependents. An audit of those payments revealed that the Department of Veterans Affairs has been paying benefits to more than 1,200 veterans who are dead. The exact total was 1,212 veterans who were reported dead. About 100 of the veterans have been dead a decade or more. Auditors said the department could have reduced the erroneous payments by matching VA benefit payment files with death information maintained by the Social Security Administration. In the past, the department relied on voluntary reporting of deaths as a basis for ending benefits.

Exercise Two:

Thomas C. Ahl appeared in Circuit Court today. He pleaded guilty last week to robbing and murdering two restaurant employees. In return for pleading guilty prosecutors promised not to seek the death penalty. He was sentenced today. Ahl is 24 years old, and the judge sentenced him to two life terms, plus 300 years. It is the longest sentence ever given anyone in your state. Ahl will be 89 before he can be considered for parole. The judge explained that Ahl had a long history of violence and brutality and that the public deserved to be protected from him. There had been no reason for him to shotgun the two employees to death. Ahl himself admitted that they had not resisted him in any way.

Exercise Three:

The president of Mexico is Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. He has been in office since January 1, 2019. Before he was president, Lopez was Mexico City mayor for six years. He was popular and left office with an 87 percent approval rating. Lopez is a leftist who has sharply cut government spending. He sold the presidential airplane and has reduced his salary and that of top government officials. For years, Mexico has suffered from widespread crime. This morning during a Mexico City news conference, Lopez announced he and his top advisers had identified 200 corrupt law enforcement officials. They will be prosecuted, Lopez said. He also announced the creation of what he called The National Security Guard. It will have 400 specially trained law enforcement officers who will be deployed all over Mexico starting next month. He said this new police force will make the nation safe for its citizens.

Exercise Four:

The restaurant is located at 480 Parkside Dr. and specializes in Chinese cuisine. It is owned by Fred Lee, who also does all the cooking. City health inspectors suspended its license late yesterday. They complained of poor food handling and storage. "The condition of the licensed premises was so serious that it was condemned as posing an immediate threat to public health," the city's emergency license suspension order states. Chester Garland, a city health inspector, said the city suspends licenses only when there are serious violations. "It has to be something that is a major problem," Garland said. "We don't just do it on minor stuff." Garland added that the restaurant has consistently failed to comply with city health codes. Violations cited yesterday by city inspectors include rodent and roach infestations. The inspectors found rodent droppings strewn about storage areas and on canned goods. Garland's report adds: "A mouse was seen running across the dining room. A live mouse was spotted in the pantry. Another mouse jumped on an inspector. Toxic materials were stored in food-preparation and dish-washing areas. Food was found improperly stored in a janitor's closet as well as in uncovered containers and in locations less than 6 inches off the floor."