



What's the Point?

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I took my first journalism course in high school. The fellow who taught it left after two years and opened a hardware store in LA. I think I was the only person he taught who went on to work as a journalist.

We learned the basics of story writing - who, what, when, where - and then learned how to write a lead. One day, the teacher wrote something like this on the board:

Mr. Charles Fenwick, principal of the Broadmoor High School, and his staff will attend the regional educator's conference in Wilmington on Thursday April 25th. Dr. Raymond White, state Secretary of Education, will keynote the conference, which will also feature an address by Dr. Marsha Newman, High School teacher of the year.

He said, "Write the lead." We sat at our desks and wrote, *Dr. White to keynote educator's conference, Fenwick to lead teachers on trip to Wilmington* and so on.

We turned them in. The teacher looked them over and said "No. What's the point?"

Your lead is, *No School Thursday*"

At that instant, I thought "What's the point? What a wonderful question!"

Notes from Nora Ephron's President's Lecture Series, Brown University 24 April 1997 (*Traction179: 1. Traction 2 Takes Off*).