Sample Speech/Presentation Story Openings (and Other Paragraphs)

As you think about your presentation or speech story, here are some sample starting paragraphs for you to consider. Leads are in **boldface**:

Example 1

**Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said yesterday that the unfolding housing crisis poses a risk to the economy and called for Congress and private mortgage companies to move more quickly to help.**

But Democrats in Congress said that it is the Bush administration that is moving too slowly. They said that the latest proposals from Paulson fall far short of what is needed to deal with the prospect of as many as 2 million families losing their homes over the next two years as their adjustable-rate mortgages reset to much higher monthly payments.

In a speech at Georgetown University’s law school, Paulson said that the financial industry should provide immediate help for homeowners trying to refinance to more affordable mortgages. He also called for an overhaul of laws and regulations governing mortgage lending to stop abusive practices that contributed to the current crisis....

Example 2

**Setting goals and making good choices will pay off later, two professional athletes from Winston-Salem told students yesterday at Kennedy Learning Center.**

"You're going to make mistakes, but if you make a series of good choices, the outcome will be so much greater," said Germene Crowell, a former receiver for the NFL’s Detroit Lions and New Orleans Saints....

Example 3

**Professionalism today goes beyond firm handshakes, eye contact and thank-you notes - a new etiquette has arisen. Electronic and virtual etiquette is a must for rising professionals of the “Google generation,” two Drake University professors told an audience of professors at Wake Forest University yesterday.**

Driven by an increase in inappropriate e-mails from students as well as provocative profiles on such Web sites as Facebook.com, Drake law professors Melissa Weresh and Lisa Penland have created a workshop to teach students the principles of professionalism in virtual communication.
They shared their work with law professors from nine law schools in North Carolina and South Carolina at Wake Forest’s law school in a presentation called “Professionalism in Virtual Communication.” …

Example 4

A woman who Ebony magazine named as one of America's 15 greatest black female preachers brought a strong message yesterday to a rapt Winston-Salem State University audience: Know your history, know where you want to go and have a backup plan for disaster.

"You need to have a vision for your life. You need to say to yourself, 'I am here for a reason,'" the Rev. Carolyn Ann Knight told an audience of students, faculty members and others.

Knight's talk at the Anderson Center was titled "If the Worst Should Come."

The audience was primed for a rousing message by a woman who often turns up on lists of dynamic female preachers....

Example 5 - Soft Lead (Nut graph in boldface italics)

After making a perfectly shaped vase, David MacDonald picked it up, then let it crash to the floor.

"Now you know what not to do," MacDonald told students yesterday in Ken Suber’s advanced-art class at Carver High School.

MacDonald, a renowned ceramics artist and professor at Syracuse University, visited Carver to give students in Suber's class a demonstration in the art of ceramics.

For an hour and a half, he gave students a firsthand look at the world of ceramics from behind a throwing wheel. As he molded lumps of clay into vases, bowls and bottles, he talked about his craft....