

Dig a Potato Today

A potato grows beneath the surface in a piece of writing. It's the thing that the reader and the writer want to dig up. Listen to the following leads. What questions arise in your minds as you listen?

I was six years old when my mother taught me the art of invisible strength.

Rules of the Game Amy Tan

You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning.

Bright Lights Big City Jay McInerney

“You must not tell anyone,” my mother said, “what I am about to tell you.”

The Woman Warrior Maxine Hong Kingston

The name my family calls me is Morning Girl, because I wake up early always with something on my mind.”

The Morning Girl Michael Dorris

- 1) Tell a story to some friends or read a piece you are working on.
- 2) Have your friends listen and write curious questions on scraps of paper.
- 3) Take your favorite question and turn it into a new lead by answering it in a sentence or two.

For example:

How big was the dog?

It was the biggest dog I'd ever seen.

Is this a true story?

You may not believe it, but what follows is a true story.

- 4) Try finding or writing a new lead to a piece from your writing folder.