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## lead, v.<sup>1</sup>

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /li:d/, U.S. /lid/

**Forms:** OE *lædan*, ME *laden*, ME *læden*, *læiden*, ME *leden*, *leaden*, (ME *leoden*, *Orm. ledenn*), ME *ledde*, ME–15 *led(e)*, ME, 16 *leede*, ME–16 (chiefly Sc.) *leide*, *leyde*, 15–16 *leade*; 15– *lead. pres. ind.* (contracted forms): 2nd sing. OE *lætst*, ME *last*; 3rd sing. OE *læt*, ME *lat*, ME *let*, ME *leth. pa. tense* OE *lædde*, ME *leaded*, ME–15 *ledd(e)*, ME *lædde*, ME *leede*, (ME *leadde*, *leddede*), ME–15 *ladde*, ME–17 *lad*, ME–15 *ledd*, (ME *leded*, Sc. *laid*), ME– *led. pa. pple.* OE *læded*, *læd*, ME–15 *ledde*, ME *ladd(e)*, *lede*, ME–16 *lad(e)*, 16 *lead(e)*, ME– *led*. Also ME with prefix *i-*, *y-*.

**Frequency (in current use):**

**Etymology:** A Common Germanic weak verb (wanting in Gothic): Old English *lædan* = Old Frisian *lêda*, Old Saxon *lêdjan* (Middle Dutch *leden*, *leiden*, Dutch *leiden*), Old High German (Middle High German, German) *leiten*, Old Norse *leiða* (Swedish *leda*, Danish *lede*) < Old Germanic *\*laidjan*, < *\*laidâ* road, journey (see *LOAD n.*, *LODE n.*), related to Old English *līðan*, Old Norse *līða* to go, travel.

The word has always served as the usual rendering of Latin *ducere*, and this has in some degree influenced the development of meaning.

**I. To conduct.**

**1. trans.** To cause to go along with oneself.

†**a.** To bring or take (a person or animal) to a place. Also with *away*, *down*, etc. *Obs.* (Phrases like *to lead captive* are now understood in sense 2.)

c825 *Vesp. Psalter* lxvii[i]. 19 Astigende in heanisse gehefte lædde heftned.

c1000 *ÆLFRIC Genesis* vi. 19 Of eallum nytenum..twegen gemacan þu lætst in to þam arce mid þe.

c1000 *ÆLFRIC Genesis* xlii. 20 Læde eowerne gingstan broðor to me.

a1175 *Cott. Hom.* 221 God ʒeledde to him niatenu..and adam ham alle namen ʒesceop.

c1275 (†?a1200) *LA3AMON Brut* (Calig.) (1978) l. 13375 [He] ladde uorð Petreiuu læð þeh hit weore him.

1297 *R. Gloucester's Chron.* (Rolls) 8803 Oþer kniʒtes þer were inome,..& ilad in to engelond.

a1325 (†c1250) *Gen. & Exod.* (1968) l. 2193 He dede hem binden and leden dun And speren faste in his prisun.

a1325 (†c1250) *Gen. & Exod.* (1968) l. 858 Wifwes and childre..He ledden a-wei wið herte prud.

†a1387 J. TREVISA tr. R. Higden *Polychron.* (St. John's Cambr.) (1871) III. 97 Þat þe kyng schulde be lad away prisoner in to Babilon.

c1400 *Mandeville's Trav.* (1839) x. 113 The Jews ladden him upon an highe Roche.

c1480 (†a1400) *SS. Simon & Jude* 408 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) I. 220 Þe forsad byschapis of þat stede al hale þe puple with þam lede.

a1500 (†a1460) *Towneley Plays* (1994) I. xiv. 160 Boldly thou thaym bynde And with the leyde.

1530 J. PALSGRAVE *Lesclarcissement* 604/2 Shall I leade him away with me?

- 1533 J. GAU tr. C. Pedersen *Richt Vay* 70 God sal leid thaimē vp to the heuine with hime quhilk ar deid in christ.
- 1578 J. LYLY *Euphues* f. 71<sup>v</sup> Ieremy before the people were led away apointeth their exile to continew threescore and ten yeares.
- 1705 T. HEARNE *Ductor Historicus* (ed. 2) I. III. 463 The Pannonians..he successfully subdued, leading away the Younger sort into other Countries.
- quasi-passive in gerund.
- c1515 LD. BERNERS tr. *Bk. Duke Huon of Burdeux* (1882–7) cxliv. 539 The other prysoners, whom we see yonder ledyng to the dethe warde.
- 1757 R. GRIFFITH & E. GRIFFITH *Lett. Henry & Frances* II. cxcii. 38 Suppose a Criminal, leading forth to Execution.

**b.** To carry or convey, usually in a cart or other vehicle. Now *north*.

*dial.*: To cart (coal, corn, stones, turf, etc.). **to lead in** (grain): to house.

- c900 tr. Bede *Eccl. Hist.* (1890) i. i. 30 Of Breotone nædran on scipum lædde wæron.
- c900 tr. Bede *Eccl. Hist.* III. v. [vii.] 168 Hædde biscop heht his lichoman..lædan to Wintaceastre.
- a1225 *Leg. Kath.* 2251 We, a3eines þin heast, þæt licome awei ledden.
- c1275 (▶a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Calig.) (1963) l. 1772 To læden þis garisume to leuene mine fadere.
- 1362 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* A. IV. 130 Lawe schal ben a laborer and leden [1377 lede] a-feld dounge.
- c1386 CHAUCER *Monk's Tale* 158 The vessel of the temple he with hym ladde.
- a1400 (▶a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 5129 Siluer and gold þai wit þam ledd.
- c1400 *Mandeville's Trav.* (1839) xxiii. 248 Thei leiden hire Houses with hem upon chariottes.
- ?c1450 *Life St. Cuthbert* (1891) l. 5300 Þare armour hame þai led.
- a1475 *Bk. Curtasye* (Sloane 1986) l. 813 in *Babees Bk.* (2002) l. 326 Þe vssher ledes þat on hed ryzt.
- a1475 *Liber Cocorum* (Sloane) (1862) 33 Whenne þou hast covered hit [sc. venesone] so, Lede hit home.
- 1487 (▶a1380) J. BARBOUR *Bruce* (St. John's Cambr.) x. 195 Vith this bunnok spokin had thai To leid [1489 Adv. lede] thair hay.
- 1488 (▶c1478) HARY *Actis & Deidis Schir William Wallace* (Adv.) (1968–9) x. l. 916 A drawcht off wod to leid.
- 1528 in J. Raine *Testamenta Eboracensia* (1884) V. 260 To Smythson, for ledinge corne at Acclame, vjs. viijd.
- 1530 J. PALSGRAVE *Lesclarcissement* 604/2 He was ledde thorowe the towne upon a hardell and so to the galowes.
- 1572 (▶a1500) *Taill of Rauf Coilzear* (1882) 597 Leidand Coillis he 3eid To Paris the way.
- 1594 *Acct.-bk. W. Wray* in *Antiquary* (1896) 32 55 For leding ij lodes of haye, xij<sup>d</sup>.
- 1603 G. OWEN *Descr. Penbrokshire* (1891) 93 And being thus dried throwlie they [turfs] are led home and layed then vp.
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *All's Well that ends Well* (1623) IV. iii. 270 Faith sir, ha's led the drumme before the English Tragedians.

- 1683 in J. Barmby *Churchwardens' Accts. Pittington* (1888) 341 For two load of lime and leading it, 5s.
- 1721 A. RAMSAY *Elegy Patie Birnie* v Tho' peats and turfs and a's to lead.
- 1799 J. ROBERTSON *Gen. View Agric. Perth* 195 In no case to reap when they ought to be leading in (housing) their grain.
- 1839 W. B. STONEHOUSE *Hist. Isle of Axholme* 43 One shilling a load is the price generally paid for leading a cart-load of warp.
- 1841 *Jrnl. Royal Agric. Soc.* 2 II. 191 He undertakes to convey (or lead, as the term is) all the materials for a new building.
- 1887 H. CAINE *Deemster* II. xvi. 14 Davy was sent for the pair of oxen to where they were leading manure.
- 1891 J. C. ATKINSON *Forty Years Moorland Parish* 64 The people of the farm in question..had been leading, that is, carting hay in a 'catchy' time.

†**c.** Of a natural agent, e.g. the wind: To carry. *Obs.*

- 1297 *R. Gloucester's Chron.* (Rolls) 2023 He ariuede at souþ hamptone as þe wind hom adde ylad.
- a1300 *Cursor Mundi* 1805 Þe wind him ledd a-pon þe flodd.
- 1633 BP. J. HALL *Plaine Explic. Hard Texts* I. 606 Causing the clouds, to lead in store of raine.

**d.** To bring forward, adduce (testimony); to bring (an action). Now only in *Sc. Law*.

- a1400 (►a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 16278 Quat mister es o wijtnessing again him for to lede?
- 1503 in J. Stuart *Extracts Council Reg. Aberdeen* (1844) I. 430 The richtis, ressonis and allegacionis of batht the said parties,..led, herde, sene and understandin.
- a1525 (►c1448) R. HOLLAND *Bk. Howlat* l. 224 in W. A. Craigie *Asloan MS* (1925) II. 101 The crovss capone..Was officiale but less yat ye law leidis.
- 1564 *Warrant* in D. H. Fleming *Mary Q. of Scots* (1897) 494 Forsamekill as thair wes ane proces of forfaltoure led aganis Mathew sumtyme Erle Leuenax [etc.].
- 1637 S. RUTHERFORD *Lett.* (1863) I. 379 A process leading ags<sup>t</sup>. my guiltiness.
- 1831 W. HAMILTON in *Edinb. Rev.* Mar. 203 No evidence has yet been led to show.
- 1884 *Law Rep.: Appeal Cases* 9 251 His wife..obtained..a judicial declaration that he had..forfeited his right to lead the proof allowed him and she then led a proof in absence.
- 1887 *Scotsman* 19 Mar. Proof was led to-day in this action of separation and aliment.

## 2.

**a.** To accompany and show the way to; to conduct, guide, *esp.* to direct or guide by going on in advance; to cause to follow in one's path. Often with advs., *astray, away, forth, in, on, out, up*, etc.

In early examples apparently merely a contextual use of sense 1.

- a900 *Martyrol.* 26 in *Old Eng. Texts* 178 Mine englas ðec lædað in ða hiofonlican Hierusalem.
- 971 *Blickl. Hom.* 27 He hine lædde upon swiþe hea dune.
- c1175 *Lamb. Hom.* 119 Monie þewas..ledað to deþe on ende þa þe heom duseliche folziað.
- ?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 14468 Caym..ledde himm [Abæl] ut upp o þe feld.
- c1275 (þ?a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Calig.) (1963) l. 551 Brutus nom Ignogen & into scipe lædde [c1300 *Otho ladde*].
- a1300 *Cursor Mundi* 24620 Vnto þe tun þan i me ledd.
- a1325 (þc1250) *Gen. & Exod.* (1968) l. 3607 Go, led ðis folc.
- a1375 *William of Palerne* (1867) l. 2618 Þe werwolf hem ladde ouer mures & muntaynes.
- 1382 WYCLIF *Psalms* lxxvii[i]. 14 He ladde hem thennes in the cloude of the day.
- c1480 (þa1400) *St. Thais* 47 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) II. 216 Þane til a chawmir scho hym lede mare priue.
- 1509 S. HAWES *Pastime of Pleasure* (1845) xxxviii. 196 The gentle porteres..on my way then me lede.
- 1570 in J. Cranstoun *Satirical Poems Reformation* (1891) I. xvi. 51 Bot he will leid him in the myre Thocht he hecht to defend him.
- 1572 (þa1500) *Taill of Rauf Coilþear* (1882) 265 To ane preuie Chalmer beliuie thay him led.
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Measure for Measure* (1623) III. i. 312 How now noble Pompey? What, at the wheels of Cæsar? Art thou led in triumph?
- 1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* XII. 309 Therefore shall not Moses..his people into Canaan lead .
- 1711 J. ADDISON *Spectator* No. 321. ¶9 Satan is afterwards led away to Gabriel.
- 1742 E. YOUNG *Complaint: Night the First* 5 O lead my Mind,..Lead it thro' various scenes of Life.
- 1847 H. ROGERS *Ess.* (1860) III. 402 The criminal must be led back by the same road by which he has been led astray.
- 1877 C. M. YONGE *Cameos* cxxxiv, in *Monthly Packet* Mar. 207 He was led into the chamber of presence.

**b. Of motives, conditions, circumstances: To guide, direct to a place.**

- a1400 (þa1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 20386 Sais me quat has you hider ledde.
- 1821 J. CLARE *Village Minstrel* II. 44 It was a happy hour That led me up to Barnack hill.
- 1861 *Temple Bar* 1 467 Chance led him to Basil.
- 1892 *Eng. Illustr. Mag.* 9 867 Instinct early led him into the political arena.

**c. Of a clue, light, sound, etc.: To serve (a person) as an indication of the way; to mark the course for. Also absol. *to lead in* (*Naut.*): to mark the course for entering port.**

- 1697 DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Georgics* IV, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 129 By the tinkling Sound of Timbrels led, The King of Heav'n in Cretan Caves they fed.
- 1824 T. CAMPBELL *Theodric* 185 Led by that clue, he left not England's shore Till he had known her.
- 1834 J. H. NEWMAN in *Brit. Mag.* Feb. 153 Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou

me on!

1860 *Mercantile Marine Mag.* 7 316 The two latter Lights *in line* lead in.

**d. absol., chiefly in figurative contexts.**

1580 SIR P. SIDNEY tr. *Psalmes David* I. i He blessed is who..[never] loosely treads The straying steps as wicked council leads.

c1614 W. MURE tr. Virgil *Dido & Æneas* I. in *Wks.* (1898) I. 89 Quhair ever thou dost leid We follow the.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI, Pt. 3* (1623) III. i. 98 We charge you..To go with vs vnto the Officers. *King*. In Gods name lead.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Othello* (1622) I. i. 183 Pray leade me on.

1624 F. QUARLES *Iob Militant* xvi. 30 My lips shall tread That ground..as Truth shall leade.

1836 J. H. NEWMAN et al. *Lyra Apost.* 111 Into God's Word..Thou leadest on and on.

1863 C. C. CLARKE *Shakespeare-characters* xvi. 390 [They] who desire to lead, must at all events make a show of following.

**e. to lead the way:** †(a) with personal obj., to guide, show the way to (*obs.*); (b) in later use (influenced by sense 13), to go in advance of others, take the lead in an expedition or course of action.

?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 3465 & te3re steorne wass wiþþ hemm To ledenn hemm þe we33e.

c1480 (►a1400) *St. Paul* 203 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) I. 35 Þe quhilkis ledand hym þe way, praide hym [etc.].

a1593 MARLOWE *Edward II* (1594) sig. E Lead on the way.

1599 H. PORTER *Angry Women Abington* (Percy Soc.) 90 Lead thou the way, and let me hold by thee.

1623 SHAKESPEARE & J. FLETCHER *Henry VIII* v. iv. 72 Lead the way Lords.

1697 DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Georgics* III, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 100 The first to lead the Way, to tempt the Flood.

1709 M. PRIOR *Ode to Col. Villiers* in *Poems* (1905) 122 And in their various Turns the Sons must tread Those gloomy Journeys, which their Sires have led.

1770 O. GOLDSMITH *Deserted Village* 170 He..allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

1832 H. MARTINEAU *Ireland* ii. 22 Dora..led the way..in an opposite direction.

1847 F. MARRYAT *Children of New Forest* I. vii. 115 I can manage it, Humphrey, so lead the way.

1874 J. R. GREEN *Short Hist. Eng. People* ii. §6. 89 In the silent growth and elevation of the English people the boroughs led the way.

**f. To aim in advance of.**

1892 W. W. GREENER *Breech-loader* 267 Theoretically it is correct to lead a quartering pigeon from five to seven feet.

1968 D. HAMILTON *Menacers* xxii. 176 I led him by roughly two feet and pressed the trigger of the Luger.

**g.** Coll. phr. **lead me to** (something previously mentioned), expressing the ability to perform or a desire to comply, or merely expressing eager assent.

1929 W. E. MILLER *To you I tell It* 107 'How wood you like to urn a piece of jack?' 'Leed me to it,' says Figgars. 'What's the propozishion?'

1934 D. L. SAYERS *Nine Tailors* IV. 307 'Can you ride a motor-bike?' 'Lead me to it, guv'nor!'

1938 D. SMITH *Dear Octopus* II. iii. 90 Lead me to that whiskey.

**h.** **to lead with one's chin** (*Boxing slang*), to 'stick one's neck out', to leave oneself unprotected; *fig.*, to behave or speak incautiously.

1949 E. S. GARDNER in *Argosy* Apr. 110/3 Let him lead with his chin. We'll work undercover.

1954 F. C. AVIS *Boxing Ref. Dict.* Lead with chin, to have a very bad stance or guard.

1968 *Listener* 18 Jan. 78/2 I thought it was a good idea to say that I was prejudiced to begin with, to lead with my chin.

1973 A. MACVICAR *Painted Doll Affair* i. 19 Don't go leading with your chin, Bruce.

**3.** Of a commander: To march at the head of and direct the movement of. Also with *on*. †Also to conduct (warfare) = Latin *ducere bellum*.

a900 *Anglo-Saxon Chron.* an. 827 (Parker MS.) Se Ecgbryht lædde fierd to Dore wiþ Norþan hymbre.

a1375 *William of Palerne* (1867) l. 1609 Wiþ þe clenest cumpanye þat euer king ladde.

1488 (►c1478) HARY *Actis & Deidis Schir William Wallace* (Adv.) (1968–9) VII. l. 1171 Hew Kercyngayme the wantgard ledis he.

a1500 (►1422) J. YONGE tr. *Secreta Secret.* (Rawl.) (1898) 154 Where ben tho that ladd the grete hostes?

1508 *Golagros & Gawane* (Chepman & Myllar) sig. bvi The thrid heght schir bantellas the batal to leid.

1513 G. DOUGLAS tr. Virgil *Æneid* XI. iii. 28 Ne na weirfair with þour pepill leid I.

1596 J. DALRYMPLE tr. J. Leslie *Hist. Scotl.* (1888) I. 332 He leidis ane armie till Northumbirland.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Macbeth* (1623) v. vi. 4 You (worthy Vnkle) Shall..Leade our first Battell.

1736 T. LEDIARD *Life Marlborough* II. 267 The Prince..led them on with great Gallantry.

1821 R. TURNER *Arts & Sci.* (ed. 18) 188 Many thousands of them [elephants] have at once been led to battle.

1847 F. MARRYAT *Children of New Forest* I. iv. 71 He longed..to lead his men on to victory.

*absol.*

- c1420 *Anturs of Arth.* (Douce) 397 Withe a launce one loft þat louely cone lede.  
 1591 H. SAVILE tr. Tacitus *Life Agricola* in *Ende of Nero: Fower Bks. Hist.* 253 The army..cried to leade into Caledonia.  
 1623 J. BINGHAM tr. Xenophon *Hist.* 10 Cyrus..told them, that his purpose was to lead against the great King.  
 1791 W. COWPER tr. Homer *Iliad* in *Iliad & Odyssey* I. IV. 430 Go therefore thou, Lead on.

#### 4.

**a.** To go before or alongside and guide by direct or indirect contact; to conduct (a person) by holding the hand or some part of the body or clothing, (an animal) by means of a cord, halter, bridle, etc. Const. *by* (the hand, etc.). Also with advs. *away, in, off, on, out, up and down*, etc. **to lead apes (in hell)**: see APE *n.* 6.

- 971 *Blickl. Hom.* 71 His þegnas..læddon him to þone eosol.  
 c1000 *West Saxon Gospels: Matt.* (Corpus Cambr.) xv. 14 Se blinda gyf he blindne læt hig feallað begen on ænne pytt.  
 c1175 *Lamb. Hom.* 111 Þet mon..sarine frefrað oðer blindne let.  
 c1330 (þ?a1300) *Sir Tristrem* (1886) l. 446 Tristrem hunters seiþe ride, Les of houndes þai ledde.  
 c1420 *Anturs of Arth.* 447 His stede was sone stabillede, and lede to þe stalle.  
 1470–85 MALORY *Morte d'Arthur* I. xlix The brachet was mine that the Knight lad away.  
 c1480 (þa1400) *St. George* 274 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) II. 184 Ta þi belt, & hyme [sc. a dragon] lede, & about his hals knyt it sone.  
 þ?a1513 W. DUNBAR *Poems* (1998) I. 137 That ane blynde man is led furth be ane vther.  
 þ?a1513 W. DUNBAR *Poems* (1998) I. 39 His fa sum be the oxtar ledis.  
 1530 J. PALSGRAVE *Lesclarcissement* 604/2 Lede my horse, I praye you, up and downe.  
 1590 SPENSER *Faerie Queene* I. I. sig. A3<sup>v</sup> A milkewhite lambe she lad.  
 1614 A. GORGES tr. Lucan *Pharsalia* I. 37 Then doth he take a faire large bull..And him vnto the Altar leades.  
 1766 O. GOLDSMITH *Vicar of Wakefield* II. iv. 69 The captive soldier was led forth.  
 1813 *Sketches of Character* (ed. 2) I. 29 [She] returned, leading in a lovely little girl.  
 1830 TENNYSON *Ode to Memory* iii, in *Poems* 60 In sweet dreams..Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.  
 1862 *Temple Bar* 4 252 The chestnut..was led off to the stable.

**b. to lead (a bride) to the altar, to church** (†also simply: ? after Latin *ducere*): To marry.

- 1530 J. PALSGRAVE *Lesclarcissement* 604/2 I lede a bride to churche, *je mayne*.  
 1700 DRYDEN tr. Ovid *Twelfth Bk. Metamorphoses* in *Fables* 429 He had either led Thy Mother then; or was by Promise ty'd.  
 1812 W. S. LANDOR *Count Julian* v. iii. 5 He leads her to the altar, to the throne.

1842 TENNYSON *Lord of Burleigh* in *Poems* (new ed.) II. 201 He..leads her to the village altar.

**c. fig.** (a) In opposition to *drive*: To guide by persuasion as contrasted with commands or threats. (b) **to lead by the nose** (for the allusion cf. quot. a1616): to cause to obey submissively. Also †**to lead by the sleeve**.

c1425 LYDGATE *Assembly of Gods* 1680 How false idolatry ledeth hem by the sleue.

1583 A. GOLDING tr. J. Calvin *Serm. on Deuteronomie* cxxi. 745 Men..suffer themselues to bee led by the noses like brute beasts.

1589 G. PUTTENHAM *Arte Eng. Poesie* III. xxiv. 246 Princes may be lead but not driuen.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Othello* (1622) I. iii. 393 The Moore..will as tenderly be led bit'h nose—as Asses are.

1631 in S. R. Gardiner *Rep. Cases Star Chamber & High Comm.* (1886) 20 You shall meete with ignorant Juryes, your duty is to open their eyes, you may not leade them by the nose.

1749 T. SMOLLETT tr. A. R. Le Sage *Gil Blas* III. VII. xii. 77 They [sc. the great] have favourite domestics, who lead them by the nose.

1856 C. KINGSLEY *Plays & Puritans* 211 A mob of fools and knaves, led by the nose in each generation by a few arch-fools and arch-knaves.

1862 *Temple Bar* 4 167 She might be led, but would not be driven.

**d. intr.** (quasi-pass.). To be led; to submit to being led.

1607 G. MARKHAM *Cavelarice* I. 75 Till hee be so tame..that he will leade vppe and downe quietlye.

1821 SCOTT *Pirate* II. xi. 277 My master may lead, but he winna drive.

1887 I. RANDALL *Lady's Ranche Life Montana* 148 In the morning the pupils [colts] have learnt their lesson, and will lead anywhere.

**5.** To guide with reference to action or opinion; to bring by persuasion or counsel *to* or *into* a condition; to conduct by argument or representation *to* a conclusion; to induce *to* do something. Said both of persons and motives, circumstances, evidence, etc.

a1225 *Leg. Kath.* 261 Þe feont..leadeð [men] to unbileau.

a1300 *Cursor Mundi* 26696 He said þar-till his wijf him ledde.

c1330 *Spec. Gy Warw.* 62 Þe world þurw his foule gile Haþ me lad to longe while.

c1380 WYCLIF *Sel. Wks.* III. 445 Herby bene man lad in to fendus temptacioun.

a1500 (►1422) J. YONGE tr. *Secreta Secret.* (Rawl.) (1898) 217 Al accordid, that kynde lad the chyld that to done.

a1538 T. STARKEY *Dial. Pole & Lupset* (1989) 21 The wyl of man ever comynly folowyth that to the wych opynyon..ledyth hyt.

1588 LD. HUNSDON *Let.* 23 Jan. in *Border Papers* (1894) I. 307 Sondrie cawses..leades me greatlie to

- mistrust the Kinges good meaning towards her Majesty.
- a1605 A. MONTGOMERIE *Devotional Poems* in *Poems* (1910) iii. 26 To lyf that leddie sall the leidd.
- 1611 M. SMITH in *Bible* (King James) Transl. Pref. 1 Bruit-beasts led with sensualitie.
- 1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* II. xxx. 177 They ought not to be led with admiration of the vertue [etc.].
- 1711 J. ADDISON *Spectator* No. 40. ¶1 This Errour they have been led into by a ridiculous Doctrine in modern Criticism.
- 1736 BP. J. BUTLER *Analogy of Relig.* Introd. p. viii Our whole Nature leads us to ascribe all moral Perfection to God.
- 1859 J. RUSKIN *Two Paths* App. i. 254 Tintoret..may lead you wrong if you don't understand him.
- 1861 M. PATTISON in *Westm. Rev.* 19 411 Edward's foreign policy led him to draw closer the ties which connected our country with Germany.
- 1871 B. STEWART *Heat* (ed. 2) §239 In studying the radiation of gases we are led to some very peculiar laws.
- 1885 *Law Rep.: Chancery Div.* 29 479 There was nothing in the prospectus to lead him to such a conclusion.
- 1888 H. F. LESTER *Hartas Maturin* II. vi. 122 She knew the colonel was easily led.
- absol.*
- 1597 BACON *Of Coulers Good & Euill* (Arb.) 138 Besides their power to alter the nature of the subject in appearance, and so leade to error.

## 6.

**a.** Of a way, road, etc.: To serve as a passage for, conduct (a person) to or into a place. Hence *absol.* or *intr.*, to have a specified goal or direction. Cf. Latin *via ducit in urbem*. Often in fig. contexts.

- a1200 *Moral Ode* 337 Læte we..þe wei bene þe lat þe niȝeðe del to helle of manne.
- ?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 12917 Forr þiss lamb iss þatt rihhte stih þatt ledeþþ upp till heffne.
- 1340 *Ayenbite* (1866) 165 Þet is þe way þet let in-to þe helle of god.
- 1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Matt. vii. 14 How streit is the ȝate and narewe the weye that ledith to lyf.
- c1480 (Þa1400) *St. Mary of Egypt* 843 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) I. 320 Gyf he..wald kene me þe gat, þat mycht me led to þe flume Iordane.
- 1509 in S. Tymms *Wills & Inventories Bury St. Edmunds* (1850) 112 Y<sup>e</sup> hygheway..ledyng toward Ipswych.
- 1526 W. BONDE *Pylgrimage of Perfection* I. sig. Dvii<sup>v</sup> Yet both entendeth to go the iourney that ledeth to the hye Ierusalem.
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Measure for Measure* (1623) IV. i. 32 A little doore, Which from the Vineyard to the Garden leades .
- 1621 M. WROTH *Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania* 452 The way of necessity leading me to follow my disdainer.
- 1710 R. STEELE *Tatler* No. 194. ¶2 There was a single Bridge that led into the Island.
- 1720 J. OZELL et al. tr. R. A. de Vertot *Hist. Revol. Rom. Republic* II. IX. 48 There were but two Ways that led equally to all the Dignities of the Republick.

- 1780 A. YOUNG *Tour Ireland* I. 288 The end of the lake at your feet is formed by the root of Mangerton, on whose side the road leads.
- 1791 A. RADCLIFFE *Romance of Forest* I. ii. 58 La Motte ascended the stairs that led to the tower.
- 1821 J. CLARE *Village Minstrel* I. 122 My rambles led me to a gipsy's camp.
- 1861 *Temple Bar* 2 547 Broad steps lead down into a garden.
- 1884 J. COLBORNE *With Hicks Pasha* 69 Then comes the eternal arid plain leading to the barren hills.
- 1889 C. SMITH *Repentance Paul Wentworth* I. ix. 187 Their road..led them through a little copse.

**b. intr.** To form a channel *into*, a connecting link *to* (something).

- 1833 *Act 3 & 4 William IV* c. 46 §95 One waste or foul water pipe..to communicate with any drain..leading into a common sewer.
- 1851 *Official Descriptive & Illustr. Catal. Great Exhib. II.* 361 Motion is..communicated to the rudder by means of two connecting rods leading to the tiller.

**c. intr. *to lead to*:** to have as a result or consequence.

- a1770 J. JORTIN *Serm.* (1771) IV. vi. 119 Pride seldom leads to truth in points of morality.
- 1845 S. AUSTIN tr. L. von Ranke *Hist. Reformation in Germany* (ed. 2) I. 277 The general disapprobation excited by the church on such weighty points, naturally led to a discussion of its other abuses.
- 1861 M. PATTISON in *Westm. Rev.* 19 412 Several seizures of English cargoes led to reprisals on our part; reprisals led to a naval war.
- 1864 J. BRYCE *Holy Rom. Empire* ii. 18 The victory of Tolbiac led to the submission of the Alemanni.
- 1885 *Manch. Examiner* 8 July 5/3 Mr. Beecher's former opinion that smoking leads to drinking.

**7. *to lead (a person) a dance:*** *transf.* and *fig.*, to put to the trouble of hurrying from place to place; hence, to compel to go through a course of irksome action. ***to lead (a person) a chase:*** lit. to give (a pursuer) trouble by one's speed or circuitous course; also *fig.* Also (by association with sense 12) ***to lead a person a life.***

- a1545 *Deth Edwarde IV* in J. Skelton *Certayne Bks.* (c1563) 29 She [sc. Fortune] toke me by the hand and led me a daunce.
- 1599 H. PORTER *Angry Women Abington* III. ii I pray God, they may..both be led a dark dance in the night!
- 1607 T. HEYWOOD *Woman Kilde with Kindnesse* sig. A4 Thats the dance her Husband meanes to leade her.
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *All's Well that ends Well* (1623) II. iii. 44 Why he's able to leade her a Carranto.
- 1711 J. ADDISON *Spectator* No. 89. ¶2 You know..my Passion for Mrs. Martha, and what a Dance she has led me.

- 1715 D. DEFOE *Family Instructor* I. i. iv. 91 I'll lead her such a Life she shall have little Comfort of me.
- 1850 A. JAMESON *Legends Monastic Orders* 70 They led St. Guthlac such a life, that [etc.].
- 1861 *Temple Bar* 4 53 He..often leads them a fine chace over hill and dale.
- 1883 G. M. FENN *Middy & Ensign* xvii. 107 The chaps would lead him such a life.
- 1892 *Cornhill Mag.* July 15 How can the captain so forget himself as to lead them a paper chase?
- 1892 *Sunday Mag.* Aug. 509/2 She had led him the life of a dog.

## 8. With an inanimate thing as object.

**a.** To conduct (water, *occasionally* steam) through a channel or pipe.

Cf. Latin *aquam ducere*. Also with *away, forth, off, out*.

- c1275 (†?a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Calig.) (1963) l. 7961 Þis wæter wes al ilæde [c1300 *Otho* was a-way idon].
- †a1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) (Douce 369(1)) (1850) Prov. v. 16 Ben lad out thi wellis withoute forth.
- 1842 *Jrnl. Royal Agric. Soc.* 3 II. 273 Deep beds of peat, from which the water has been led off by open drains.
- 1865 *Jrnl. Royal Agric. Soc.* 2nd Ser. 1 II. 276 Water may be led away from a hill~side and form a perennial stream of the greatest value.
- 1892 *Chambers's Jrnl.* 4 June 360/1 A dam and shoot were constructed..to lead the water away faster.
- 1893 *Chambers's Jrnl.* 28 Jan. 61/1 The steam..being led by a bamboo pipe to other vessels.

**b.** To guide the course or direction of (something flexible); †to train (a vine), †to trace (a line, a boundary); to draw or pass (a rope, etc.) *over* a pulley, *through* a hole, etc.

- c1050 in Thorpe *Dipl. Angl.* 376 Þa ilcan þe him ær landgemære læddon.
- 1398 J. TREVISA tr. Bartholomew de Glanville *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1495) xvii. clxxvii. 719 Vynes mow be lad wyth rayllynge aboute houses and townes.
- 1607 E. TOPSELL *Hist. Fovre-footed Beastes* 569 The nose is blackish, a line being softly led through the length, and onely through the top of the outside thereof.
- 1669 S. STURMY *Mariners Mag.* v. 3 Ten small sticks, which let him that leadeth the Chain, carry in his Hand before.
- 1834 J. S. MACAULAY *Treat. Field Fortification* 204 A charge is laid on the floor..and it is fired with a hose led outside.
- 1841 J. T. J. HEWLETT *Parish Clerk* I. 79 Bleed and blister, lead a mane, dock a tail.
- 1869 C. BOUTELL tr. J. P. Lacombe *Arms & Armour* viii. 142 System of pulleys, over which strong cords are led.
- 1876 W. H. PREECE & J. SIVEWRIGHT *Telegraphy* 37 The insulated wire..is led up through the copper sulphate.
- 1885 R. BRIDGES *Eros & Psyche* I. xxv. 11 Olive-bordered clouds o'er lilac led.
- 1892 *Longman's Mag.* Nov. 88 Ropes..led through blocks fixed to stakes.

**c.** *Naut. intr.* Of a rope: To admit of being 'led'.

c1860 H. STUART *Novices or Young Seaman's Catech.* (rev. ed.) 38 The reef tackle leads through the upper sheave of the sister block.

1867 W. H. SMYTH & E. BELCHER *Sailor's Word-bk.* *Fair-lead*, is applied to ropes as suffering the least friction in a block, when they are said to lead fair.

**†d.** To guide, steer (a boat); to guide, drive (a carriage; cf. French *conduire*); to guide (a pen). *Obs.*

1377 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* B. II. 179 Cartesadel the comissarie owre carte shal he lede.

c1380 *Eng. Wycliffite Serm.* in *Sel. Wks.* I. 12 Lede þe boot into þe hey see.

c1384 CHAUCER *Hous of Fame* II. 434 Pheton, wolde lede Algate his fader carte, and gye.

1430 LYDGATE tr. Bochas *Fall of Princes* (1554) v. vii. 127 To holde the plough and lede it with his hond.

1484 CAXTON tr. *Subtyl Historyes & Fables Esope* II. xvi Of a carter whiche ladde a Charyot or carte whiche a Mule drewe forthe.

1552 H. LATIMER *Serm. St. Andrew's Day* (1584) 241 Our Saviour..saith to Peter, *Duc in altum*—Lead thy boate into the deepe.

1567 in J. Cranstoun *Satirical Poems Reformation* (1891) I. iii. 49 With Romaine hand he could weill leid ane pen.

**e.** In literalisms of translation; = Latin *ducere* and its compounds.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Exod. xxvi. 37 Fyue pilers..before the whiche shal the tente be lad.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Ezek. v. 1 Take to thee..rasour, shauynge heeris;..thou shalt lede it bi thin heed, and bi thi beard.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Mark xiv. 47 Oon of men stondinge aboute, leding out a swerd, smot the seruaunt of the hijeste prest.

**†f.** To multiply (a number *into* another). *Obs.*

c1430 *Art Nombryng* (1922) 15 Lede the rote of o quadrat into the roote of the oþer quadrat, and þan wolle the meene shew.

c1430 *Art Nombryng* (1922) 17 A digit, the whiche lade in hymself cubikly [etc.].

**†g.****a.** To conduct (affairs); to manage, govern.

?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 17238 To ledenn. a. þe bodiȝ rihht All affterr godess lare.

c1320 *Cast. Love* 306 Wiþ-outen þeos foure wiþ worschipe Mai no Kyng lede gret lordschipe.

- ?a1366 *Romaunt Rose* 400 She had no-thing hir-self to lede..More than a child of two yeer olde.
- 1398 J. TREVISA tr. Bartholomew de Glanville *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1495) l. 2 This game rule and lede And bringe it to a good ende.
- a1400 (▶a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 4256 Pan was ioseph bath luued and dred, Wit wisdom al his werkes ledd.
- 1489 (▶a1380) J. BARBOUR *Bruce* (Adv.) l. 38 Alexander ye king..Yat Scotland haid to steyr and leid.
- 1508 *Golagros & Gawane* (Chepman & Myllar) sig. aii<sup>v</sup> Ask leif at the lord yone landis suld leid.
- 1567 *Compend. Bk. Godly Songs* (1897) 41 Gif thai heir not the Law, quhilk suld thame leide Than sall thay not in ony wayis beleif.

*absol.*

- a1300 *Cursor Mundi* 28277 Maister o childer i was sum-square, I ledd noght lele wit my lare.
- 1579 SPENSER *Shepheardes Cal.* July 185 For shepeheardes (sayd he) there doen leade, As Lordes done other where.

†**b. refl.** To conduct oneself, behave, act. *Obs.*

- ?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 1246 3iff þu þe ledesst all wiþþ skill.
- a1325 (▶c1250) *Gen. & Exod.* (1968) l. 2301 Hu he sulden hem best leden.
- a1400 (▶a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 8470 Hu þat he agh him for to lede.
- c1480 (▶a1400) *St. Theodora* 833 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) II. 123 In vertuise..he..sa can hyme-selfe leyde þat..þai..mad hyme abbot.

†**10.** To deal with, treat (cf. GUIDE *v.* 5). In pa. pple.: Circumstanced, situated, in such and such a condition.

- a1225 *Leg. Kath.* 624 Hu me ham walde þreatin ant leaden unlabelediche.
- c1275 (▶a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Calig.) (1978) l. 13832 Þer weoren Rom-leoden reoulliche. iledde.
- c1275 (▶a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Calig.) (1963) l. 4352 Heo weoren swiðe uuele ilæd [c1300 *Otho* bi-lad].
- 1362 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* A. III. 154 Heo ledeth the lawe as hire luste.
- a1400 (▶a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Trin. Cambr.) l. 13787 For so in sekenes am I-lad [Vesp. i stadd] Þat I ne may to þat watir wyne.
- 1490 CAXTON tr. *Foure Sonnes of Aymon* (1885) iii. 81 Thise glotons that leden our folke so cursedly.
- a1500 (▶c1450) *Merlin* (1899) xx. 331 Whan he saugh the kyng Rion so euell I-ledde, it a-noyed hym sore.

**II.** To carry on.

†**11.** To engage or take part in, to perform (dances, songs), to utter (joyful or mournful) sounds. Cf. Latin *ducere carmen*, *choros*, German *die reihen führen*. *Obs.*

A different sense of *to lead a dance* appears under sense 13.

- OE *Andreas* (1932) 1477 Ac wæs eft swa ær þurh þa æðelan miht lof lædende, ond on his lice trum.  
 a1300 *Cursor Mundi* 28147 Caroles, iolites, and plaies, Ic haue be-haldyn and ledde in ways.  
 a1325 (†c1250) *Gen. & Exod.* (1968) l. 699 Of ðis kinge wil we leden song.  
 c1325 *Coer de L.* 3739 The damyseles lede daunse.  
 †a1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) (Douce 369(1)) (1850) Judith iii. 10 Ledende dauncis in trumpis and timbris.  
 c1400 (†?c1390) *Sir Gawain & Green Knight* (1940) l. 1894 3et is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes.  
 1490 CAXTON tr. *Fourre Sonnes of Aymon* (1885) xx. 446 I have seen Reynawd, Alard, guychard, & Rychard, ledyng grete ioye wyth grete company of knyghtes.  
 1493 *Festivall* (1515) 26 b Thou hast thyn armes spredde to lede karolles and daunces.

## 12.

**a.** To go through, pass (life, †a portion of time). Cf. Latin *ducere vitam*, Greek *ἀγειν βίον*, etc. Rarely, †To support life *by* (bread). †Also with *forth*.

- c900 tr. Bede *Eccl. Hist.* (1890) iv. xxviii. [xxvii.] 360 Se ær in medmyclum ealonde, þæt is Farne nemned, ancorlif lædde.  
 a1000 *Boeth. Metr.* (Gr.) vii. 40 Forðon orsorg lif ealrig lædað woruldmæn wise buton wendinge.  
 c1175 *Lamb. Hom.* 89 God sette e þam israelisce folce hu heo sculden heore lif leaden.  
 ?c1200 *Ormulum* (Burchfield transcript) l. 9359 Þatt haffdenn ledd a33 þe33re lif. Affterr þe flæshess wille.  
 ?a1366 *Romaunt Rose* 216 She..ladde hir lyf only by breed Kneden with eisel.  
 1393 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* C. xvii. 18 That al here lyf leden in lowenesse and in pouerte.  
 a1400 (†a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 13279 Wit þair fissing war þai fedd, And pouer liuelade þar-wit þai ledd.  
 a1400 (†a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 4027 He ledd his liue wit-vten blam.  
 c1425 *Seven Sag.* (P.) 232 To have another wyf, For to ledde with thy lif.  
 1523 LD. BERNERS tr. J. Froissart *Cronycles* I. xxiii. 32 Thus this lady ledde forth her lyfe ther mekely.  
 1569 J. ROGERS *Glasse Godly Love* 178 Very few leade lyves..according to the lawes of Christe.  
 1578 J. LYLY *Euphues* f. 83 He may at his leasure,..lead his Winter in Athens, his Summer in Naples, [etc.].  
 1612 H. PEACHAM *Minerua Britanna* l. 46 Heere sits Repentance, solitarie, sad,..As greewing for the life, that she hath lad.  
 a1661 T. FULLER *Worthies* (1662) Chesh. 180 He led his old age in London.  
 1710 R. STEELE *Tatler* No. 166. ¶2 The Tastless Manner of Life, which a Set of idle Fellows lead in this Town.  
 1819 G. CRABBE *Tales of Hall* II. xii. 6 They led in comfort a domestic life.  
 1820 KEATS *Lamia* l, in *Lamia & Other Poems* 21 In Corinth..she..had led Days happy as [etc.].  
 1856 J. A. FROUDE *Hist. Eng.* (1858) I. i. 13 That no human being should be at liberty to lead at his own pleasure an unaccountable existence.

1873 R. BROWNING *Red Cotton Night-cap Country* III. 156 Do lead your own life and let ours alone!

†**b.** To pass through (pain, suffering); to bear, endure.

c1330 R. MANNYNG *Chron.* (1810) 15 Suffre not Sir Frethebald long to lede þis pyne.

a1400 (þ?a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 15703 Þe strang soru þat he ledd can na man rede in run.

c1475 *Partenay* 3785 Non knew the sorow by thaim lade and bore.

a1500 (þ?a1400) *Sir Torrent of Portyngale* (1887) l. 1054 Yt ys wyll the worse to lede.

**III.** To precede, be foremost. (Cf. sense 2)

**13.**

**a.** To have the first place in; to march in the front line of; *lit.* and *fig.*  
esp. in **to lead the dance** (see DANCE *n.* 6), **to lead the van**.

c1380 WYCLIF *Sel. Wks.* II. 360 Crist þat led þe daunce of love.

a1640 J. FLETCHER & P. MASSINGER *Customs of Countrey* II. i, in F. Beaumont & J. Fletcher *Comedies & Trag.* (1647) sig. Aa3<sup>v</sup>/1 They heard your Lordship Was by the Ladies choise to lead the dance.

1697 DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Æneis* IX, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 465 Messapus leads the Van.

1697 DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Æneis* XI, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 565 Asylas leads the Chase.

1736 T. LEDIARD *Life Marlborough* I. 98 The Grenadiers led the Van.

1845 P. J. BAILEY *Festus* (ed. 2) 81 May our country ever lead The world, for she is worthiest.

1865 J. R. LOWELL *Wks.* (1890) V. 285 A commonwealth whose greatest sin it has been to lead the van in freedom of opinion.

1869 A. W. WARD tr. E. Curtius *Hist. Greece* II. III. iii. 478 In ancient times the *choregi* themselves led the chorus.

1884 *Graphic* 23 Aug. Your cousin Gordon and I. had led the van all the morning.

1893 *Harper's Mag.* Feb. 385/2 Of the causes..pneumonia led the list.

**b. absol.** To go first, to have the first place. Also with *off*.

1798 CAPT. MILLAR Aug. in Ld. Nelson *Disp. & Lett.* (1846) VII. p. cliv The Goliath was leading, the Zealous next.

1846 W. S. LANDOR *Imaginary Conversat.* in *Wks.* II. 228/1 The mounted slave..led off with his master's charger.

1892 *Sat. Rev.* 2 July 10/2 The boat..was leading by two hundred yards.

1900 *Blackwood's Edinb. Mag.* June 789 The Admiral's frigate led.

*fig.*

1858 W. GREENER *Gunnery in 1858* 300 If we take thirty or thirty-five yards' distance as an average, the latter will not 'lead' in the race.

1891 *Pall Mall Gaz.* 20 Oct. 6/1 The small hats which are to lead for the coming season.

**14. intr.****a. Music.** (See quot. 1880.)

1880 G. GROVE *Dict. Music* *Lead, to*, in fugues or imitative music, is to go off first with a point or subject, which is afterwards taken up by the other parts successively. Thus in the Amen Chorus in the Messiah the bass 'leads'.

**b. Change-ringing.** Of a bell: To have the 'lead' (see LEAD *n.*<sup>2</sup> 8a).

1671 *Tintinnalugia* 82 Every bell leads four times, and lies behind twice, except when [etc.].

**15.**

**a. trans.** To direct by one's example; to set (a fashion); to take the directing or principal part in (proceedings of any kind); to be chief of (a party, a movement); to have the official initiative in the proceedings of (a deliberative body).

1642 T. FULLER *Holy State* III. xxv. 228 They should rather lead a Fashion of thrift, than follow one of riot.

1697 J. HUMFREY *Righteousness God* I. 2 The Trent Doctrine (which is the perfect Papists) I must confess, is lead them by St. Austine.

1841 W. SPALDING *Italy & Ital. Islands* II. 266 The famous insurrection led by Masaniello.

1872 C. E. MAURICE *Life S. Langton* i. 22 The Abbot..helped to lead the movement.

1880 C. R. MARKHAM *Peruvian Bark* 335 The Government should retain the chinchona plantations, and continue to lead the cultivation.

1891 *Sat. Rev.* 31 Oct. 494/1 Disraeli still led the House of Commons.

1892 *Pall Mall Gaz.* 15 Sept. 7/1 He was able to lead the work himself.

1892 *Eng. Illustr. Mag.* 9 867 In conversation he seems rather to be led than to lead.

**b.** To take the directing part in (singing, a musical performance), to perform one's own part so as to guide the others; so **to lead a band**, **to lead an orchestra**. Similarly, **to lead the prayers** (of a congregation), **to lead (a congregation) in prayer**. Also *absol.*

1849 *Chambers's Information for People* (new ed.) II. 764/2 Sometimes a tenor voice will attempt to lead the trebles.

1859 G. A. LAWRENCE *Sword & Gown* v. 51 He is so very anxious to get Cecil to lead the singing in church.

1866 G. MACDONALD *Ann. Quiet Neighb.* (1878) xiii. 245 This fine old church in which I was honoured to lead the prayers of my people.

1880 G. SMITH *Cowper* iii. 41 Cowper himself was made to do violence to his intense shyness by

leading in prayer.

- 1883 G. M. FENN *Middy & Ensign* xxvi. 159 He..led the chorus, which was lustily trolled out by all present.
- 1891 *Graphic* 31 Oct. 518/3 He went to lead the orchestra at the concert.
- 1892 *Harper's Mag.* May 821/2 A woman..led the singing.

## 16. Of a barrister:

**a. trans.** To act as leading counsel in (a cause); to act as leader to (another barrister); to take precedence of.

- 1806 J. BERESFORD *Miseries Human Life* I. i. 12 Were I, however, employed to lead the cause on our side.
- 1883 J. H. SLATER *Guide Legal Prof.* 17 Queen's Counsel are usually termed 'Leaders', and they sit in front of the utter Barristers, whom they are said to 'lead' in any particular case in which both are engaged.
- 1884 *Law Times* 11 Oct. 384/1 It has been the practice of English Queen's Counsel to lead colonial Queen's Counsel in appeals before the Judicial Committee.

## b. absol. or intr.

- 1861 TROLLOPE *Orley Farm* (1862) I. xxxiv. 268 Of course I must lead in defending her.

## 17. Cards.

**a. intr.** To play the first card in a round or trick. Also with *off*. Said also of the card. **to lead to or up to**: to play a card in order to bring out (cards held by another player). Also in *indirect pass*.

- 1677 G. MIEGE *New Dict. French & Eng.* II. sig. Dd4<sup>v</sup>/1 To lead (in Cards), *jouër le premier*.
- 1728 E. CHAMBERS *Cycl.* at *Ombre* The three first, or principal Trumps, are call'd Matadores; which have this Privilege, that they are not obliged to attend an inferior Trump when it leads.
- 1742 E. HOYLE *Short Treat. Game Whist* 11 When you lead, begin with the best Suit in your Hand.
- 1863 'CAVENDISH' *Princ. Whist* (ed. 5) 75 You would often do better to..lead up to the weak suit of your right-hand adversary, or through the strong suit of your left-hand adversary.
- 1879 'CAVENDISH' *Card Ess.* 110 Lead originally from your strongest suit.
- 1879 'CAVENDISH' *Card Ess.* 165 He led off with his own strongest suit.
- 1892 *Field* 16 July 120/1 He was keeping his tenace to be led to.

**b. trans.** As first player, to play (a specified card); to play one of (a suit or a specified suit). Also with *out*.

- 1739 SWIFT *Verses on Death Dr. Swift: Nov.* 1731 12 I lead a Heart.

- 1742 E. HOYLE *Whist* (1763) 5 Let us suppose the right-hand Adversary leads a Suit.
- 1778 T. JONES *Hoyle's Games Improved* 90 Lead Punto.
- 1843 THACKERAY *Ravenswing* v, in *Fraser's Mag.* Aug. 189/1 You led the club.
- 1879 'CAVENDISH' *Card Ess.* 111 It is an excellent plan to lead out first one suit and then another.
- 1879 'CAVENDISH' *Card Ess.* 171 I led knave of diamonds..The club was then led through me.
- 1879 'CAVENDISH' *Card Ess.* 198 I led the king of trumps.
- 1891 *Field* 28 Nov. 843/1 He ought in any case to lead trumps.

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## PHRASAL VERBS

In idiomatic combination with adverbs. (For the non-specialized combinations, see the several senses and the advs.) **to lead away**

**1. trans.** To induce to follow unthinkingly. Chiefly in *pass.*: to yield to enthusiasm, to give credence to misrepresentation.

- 1736 T. LEDIARD *Life Marlborough* III. 163 Some Men are led away by the Spirit of Party.
- 1861 *Temple Bar* 2 395 Grace is easily led away.

**2. Naut. to lead it away:** to take one's course.

- 1720 D. DEFOE *Life Capt. Singleton* 225 We led it away, with the Wind large, to the Maldives.

## to lead off

**1. trans.** To 'open', take the first steps in (a dance, a ball); hence *gen.* to begin, make a beginning in; to open (a conversation or discussion). Const. *with*.

- 1817 J. AUSTEN *Sanditon* vi, in *Minor Wks.* (1954) 389 Sir Edw: Denham & Miss Denham, whose names might be said to lead off the Season.
- 1847 *Punch* 27 Mar. 126/2 To lead off a list of Expiring Acts with one that is to live till the National Debt is paid off..is a delusion.
- 1881 E. LYNN LINTON *My Love!* I. xiii. 229 The twins leading off the family ball.
- 1890 A. GISSING *Village Hampden* II. iv. 66 The dance..was led off to the popular strains of the 'Keel-Row'.
- 1893 *Illustr. London News* 28 Jan. 109/2 A well-known dramatic critic led off the congratulations.

**2. intr. or absol.** Also with *to*.

- 1806 R. CUMBERLAND *Mem.* 18 On some occasions, she would persist in a determined taciturnity, to the regret of the company present; and at other times would lead off in her best manner.
- 1809 B. H. MALKIN tr. A. R. Le Sage *Adventures Gil Blas* I. III. v. 383 I led off with five or six coxcomical bows.
- 1862 *Temple Bar* 4 500 The primo tenore..leads off with 'Hard times no more'.
- 1882 R. L. STEVENSON *Familiar Stud. Men & Bks.* 267 A boy of fifteen to lead off with a lass of seventeen.
- 1893 *Harper's Mag.* Jan. 210/2 He led off with his companion in a sort of quickstep.
- 1911 *Chambers's Jrnl.* July 463/2 From these [wagons] rubber tubes protected by encircling wire lead off to each of the streets.

## to lead on

**1. trans.** To induce gradually to advance; to entice or beguile into going to greater lengths.

- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1623) II. i. 91 Giue him a show of comfort in his Suit, and lead him on with a fine baited delay.
- 1833 J. KEBLE *Serm.* (1848) vi. 141 She will continually be led on from bad to worse.
- 1841 DICKENS *Old Curiosity Shop* I. vi. 115 I've led her on to tell her secret.
- 1891 MRS. HENNIKER *Sir George* vi. 113 Don't pretend, now, you didn't encourage and lead me on.

**2. intr.** To direct conversation to a subject.

- 1891 F. W. ROBINSON *Her Love & his Life* III. VI. ix. 195 Mike led on to the one subject which engrossed him.

## to lead out

**1. trans.** = *to lead off* at Phrasal verbs. Also, to conduct (a partner) to the dance.

- 1819 SCOTT *Bride of Lammermoor* viii, in *Tales of my Landlord* 3rd Ser. III. 115 The picture of auld Sir Malise Ravenswood came down on the ha' floor, and led out the brawl before them a'.
- 1859 C. READE *Love me Little* (1868) xiv. 190 The stable-boy..leading out one of the housemaids..proceeded to country dancing.

*absol.*

- 1776 S. J. PRATT *Pupil of Pleasure* (1777) I. 172 The soft things he said, while we led out.

**2. intr.** Of cattle: to set *out* when driven.

1903 A. ADAMS *Log of Cowboy* xx. 129 The cattle led out as if walking on a wager.

**to lead through**

*Mountaineering*. Said of two climbers: to act alternately as leaders (see quotes.). Hence **leading through** *n.*

1945 G. W. YOUNG *Mountain Craft* (ed. 4) v. 184 Nowadays, two such experts..make a practice of 'leading through': that is..the second man on reaching his leader climbs straight on past him and leads the next section.

1955 M. E. B. BANKS *Commando Climber* ix. 177 We were leading through, that is to say, one of us would climb a pitch and belay himself to the rock, whereupon the other would climb up to him and then continue beyond to lead the next pitch.

1970 A. BLACKSHAW *Mountaineering* (rev. ed.) v. 143 For experienced climbers two is the best number since this is quick and allows them to 'lead through'.

1970 A. BLACKSHAW *Mountaineering* (rev. ed.) xvii. 420 Leading through may not save as much time on alpine rock as it does on British rock.

**to lead up****1. trans.** = *to lead off* at Phrasal verbs ? *Obs.*

1731 LADY M. W. MONTAGU *Farewell to Bath* in *Poems* v I've led up many a ball.

1753 S. RICHARDSON *Hist. Sir Charles Grandison* VI. xxvii. 166 What a frolic dance will she and her new husband, in a little while, lead up.

1766 O. GOLDSMITH *Vicar of Wakefield* I. ix. 82 Mr. Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball.

1804 M. EDGEWORTH *Limerick Gloves* iii, in *Pop. Tales* I. 260 She did not object to her own Jenny's leading up the ball.

**2. intr. to lead up to:** to prepare gradually for: to form a gradual preparation for.

1861 *Temple Bar* 4 101 The circumstances which led up to the explosion of the..conspiracy.

1880 J. MCCARTHY *Hist. our Own Times* III. xlv. 381 Perhaps he had deliberately led up to this very point.

1892 B. F. WESTCOTT *Gospel of Life* Pref. 22 All earlier history leads up to the Incarnation.

1892 *Sat. Rev.* 2 Jan. 16/2 The harlequinade..is led up to by a tasteful transformation scene.

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**DRAFT ADDITIONS 1997**

*Boxing.* To make an attacking punch; to make the first of a series of punches. Frequently const. *with*. Cf. LEAD *n.*<sup>2</sup> 5c.

- 1895 T. ROOSEVELT *Wks.* (1926) XIV. 205 If you are going to 'lead freely' you have got to 'take punishment', if you will allow me to speak in the language of those who box.
- 1927 D. HAMMETT in *Black Mask* Feb. 28/1 A paluka who leads with his right.
- 1935 *Encycl. Sports, Games & Pastimes* 105/1 When a beginner is directed by his instructor to lead to the body, it is no use his aiming a blow at his antagonist's chest.
- 1952 *Amat. Boxing* ('Know the Game' Ser.) 16/1 As he leads, parry his right towards your right with the left and then lead with a right swing to head or body.

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**DRAFT ADDITIONS 1997**

*Law.* To ask (a witness) leading questions. Cf. sense *to lead on* 1 at Phrasal verbs below. Chiefly *U.S.*

- 1833 A. ALISON *Practice Criminal Law Scotl.* xiii. 545 Witnesses are to be examined without being led.
- 1899 *Southwestern Reporter* 50 124/1 It..enables the examiner to lead even an honest witness in such manner as to give to the testimony a false color.
- 1973 *Times* 17 Oct. 20/3 The police sergeant..was..slapped down by the clerk of the court for leading his witnesses.
- 1983 *Southern Reporter* (U.S.) CDXXXVI. 479/1 Ordinarily, leading questions are permitted on cross-examination, and the rule against leading one's own witness is relaxed.

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**DRAFT ADDITIONS 1997**

**a. trans. Sport.** To be ahead of (another team or player) in terms of points, goals, etc. Usually const. *by*. Also *transf.*, to exceed or outnumber *by* a specified margin.

- 1877 *Spirit of Times* 24 Nov. 449/2 At 800 yards the Massachusetts men held steadily, Wemyss leading with 71, Jackson and Law 70.
- 1907 C. E. MULFORD *Bar-20* xi. 120 In this contest Hopalong Cassidy led his nearest rival..by twenty cut-outs.
- 1946 *Times* 26 June 2/3 The Dutch pair, after missing a set point when leading by six games to five,

finally secured the first set at 9–7.

1979 *Amer. Speech* **54** 73 In another study..*will* led *shall* in frequency of occurrence by only 59 percent to 41 percent.

1989 *Daily Tel.* 6 July 35 (*heading*) Northants, with seven wickets standing, lead Kent by 90 runs.

**b. intr.** Of a newspaper or other journalistic media: to use a particular item as the main story. Const. †*upon, with*.

1907 *Daily Chron.* 5 Mar. 6/7 The case was of an entrancing subtlety;..and every newspaper ‘led’ upon the result.

1986 *Times* 23 July 16/6 For Princess Margaret's wedding *The Times*, under a notoriously uncourtierly editor, did not even lead with the story.

1990 A. GORDON *Safe at Home* iii. 14 There was nothing about the latest murder, which had been discovered after the morning edition deadline, but the 7:00 CBC Radio news led with it.

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## DRAFT ADDITIONS JUNE 2015

*intr. Mountaineering and Rock Climbing.* To climb in first place while being belayed, with the responsibility of ascending a route or pitch and of placing gear or protection, or of attaching a rope to preplaced gear.

Also *trans.*: to climb (a route, grade of route, etc.) in this way. Cf.

SECOND *v.*<sup>1</sup> 1e.

In *traditional climbing* or *trad climbing* the lead climber places the gear; in *sport climbing* the lead climber uses preplaced gear.

1899 *Climbers' Club Jrnl.* Feb. 104 The usual modesty about who has to lead is discussed and settled as the climb up the first pitch is completed.

1912 *Sc. Mountaineering Club Jrnl.* Feb. 26 Ling, who was leading, then strode over to a foothold, which gave an awkward position, but here..one had a really good belay.

1920 G. W. YOUNG *Mountain Craft* i. 40 To lead and choose the line is definitely more fatiguing than to follow.

1975 *Climber & Rambler* Apr. 154/1 At that time, 1955, you were regarded as pretty good if you could lead VS and the harder climbs were guarded by an aura of difficulty.

1989 *N.Y. Times* 31 Dec. SM43/1 I had tried leading it. I knew you had to totally commit to doing the moves, otherwise the chance of surviving would be minimal.

2008 A. RICHARDSON *Rock Climbing* (2009) 15 Learning to lead is exhilarating, yet daunting.

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