

Lesson 5: Hooking the Reader

Goal: Write an opening statement that will grab the reader's attention.



Watch the DVD lesson titled, Hooking the Reader.

Key Points



The thumb represents the hook. Thumbs up!



The hook grabs the reader's attention and makes him want to continue reading the essay. It's like the bait on a fishhook. The fish bites it, and the fisherman reels him in.



Avoid these types of beginnings:

- This paper is about...
- In this essay, I'm going to write about...
- Jumping in and giving information about the topic without an introduction.
 - Example of a poor introduction:
Black Widow spiders are arachnids.
- Overused expressions such as:
It was a dark and stormy night.



A title can be a hook:

- Unusual title: My Neighbors Are Old Goats
- Alliteration: Fussin', Fightin', and Forgivin'
- Rearrange a familiar title, quote, or name of a book, movie, or song: War and Peas



1. Question- causes the reader to participate because a question needs an answer
2. Interesting facts- arouses the reader's curiosity
3. Setting the scene- gets the reader's imagination involved
4. Dialogue- draws the reader into the relationship
5. Powerful description- engages the reader's senses
6. Action- gives a sense of adventure
7. Element of surprise- takes the reader off-guard
8. Powerful quote- the reader identifies with the person quoted
9. Brief story- everybody loves a story
10. Appropriate humor- makes the reader laugh

*What is written without effort is generally read without pleasure.
-Samuel Johnson*

Writing Sample



Question:

Are you tired of getting out of your nice warm bed and putting on freezing clothes?

Chad G. - age 15

How would you like it if someone came into your peaceful turkey farm and took you away from all twenty-three brothers, nineteen sisters, and your poor mother?

Bobby Z. - age 15

If you found a doorway to another world, would you want to open it or would you seal it permanently? Would you try to harness its power or would you try and destroy it? What if you couldn't destroy it? What if you couldn't open it? Or worse, what if it was open and you couldn't seal it? What if it pulled you in too fast to even make that decision?

Jeremy W. - age 13

Interesting Facts:

I figured out why they call this place the ice planet. It's -373 degrees Fahrenheit here!

Breanne L. - age 11

The Acura NSX has a supercharged Doch Vtec V6 engine with the power of 290 horses along with 224 human foot pounds of torque.

David L.- age 13

Setting the Scene:

Imagine a large room in a research center at Duke University. As I walk into the room I see several doctors in lab coats. Some are wearing stethoscopes, others have gloves on their hands, and the rest are holding clipboards as they walk by. When I enter the

room I smell different types of chemicals and fumes of smoke from Bunsen burners that have soured the air. Test tubes and flasks act like prisms separating the sunlight coming through the windows. Cages full of cedar chips house lab rats, hamsters, and mice. Dissecting kits for amphibians are open and ready for use. Each lab cubicle has a microscope, chair, pencil, and paper.

Jackie M.- age

13

Dialogue:

“Let’s celebrate!” one of the mathematicians said triumphantly after several U.S. mathematicians discovered the largest known prime number.

Rachel I.- age

13

“And sixteen cents is your change. Thank you and come again.” Mr. Robert Hiss said thank you and walked to his car.

Bobby Z. - age 15

Powerful Description:

I was roaming through the cold ocean that day. My stomach was empty and I could feel it growling. I hadn’t eaten in ten minutes and I was starving for food.

Allison W. - age 13

Sweat raced down my face and back. My heart beat wildly. My legs throbbed with pain and I felt as though every cell in my body would burst at any moment. Marriage proposals aren’t easy!

B.L.

Action:

Ring...ring...ring... John Matheson’s cell phone rang. He politely excused himself from the restaurant table where he was having

**a business lunch with a client.
Jared D. - age 13**

**Emily ran down the stairs to answer the door. Grandma Miller was coming to visit and she was finally here!
Allison W. - age 13**

Element of Surprise:

**After packaging up pork tenderloin and ribeye steaks, Genghis Porterhouse Korfin, owner of Ghengis Meats, was sharpening his knives when a large monster smashed through his window.
Rachel I.- age 13**

**Seven o'clock and all is silent. Eight o'clock and all is silent. Ten o'clock and all is silent. And then here it comes- the smell of pizza through my bedroom door.
Jared D. - age 13**

Brief Story:

**For one brief day I was a celebrity. It happened when I was a mere three years old. A reporter spied me eating cotton candy during a parade. He bought another round and started snapping pictures. The next day my bouncy brown curls and cotton candy beard appeared on the front page of the Mt.Holly newspaper. Of course, no one knew about it because my grandpa bought every paper around.
B.L.**

Powerful Quote:

**I have a dream! (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
B.L.**

**Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise, but it might also make him grumpy!
B.L.**

Humor

**(To the tune of All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth)
All I want for Christmas is some dirt bike boots,
Some dirt bike boots,
Oh, some dirt bike boots.
Gee, if I could only have some dirt bike boots,
Then I would have a Merry Christmas.**

**Chad G.-
age 15**

About 5823 days, 8 hours, and 43 minutes ago a little pink blob of skin was born. He was a handsome blob and his name was Austin.

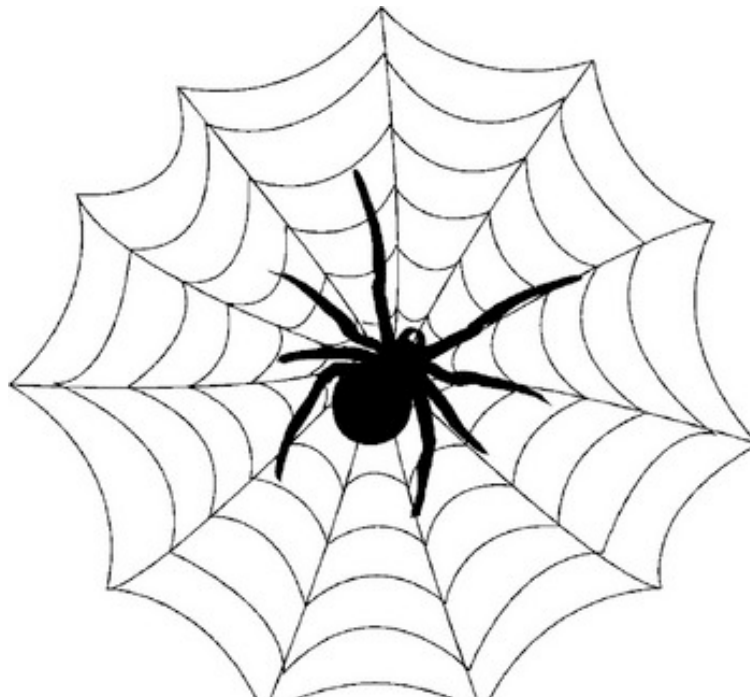
age 16

Austin W.-



Read the hook from my expository essay about Black Widow spiders.

In the murky shadows she silently waits, a merciless killer hidden by the cover of darkness. One tiny insect, a slight web vibration, and she darts in for the kill.



Hands-On Activities



Read through the sample hooks. Choose a few types that you think would work best for your expository essay.



Write some sample hooks. Read them to a few people and watch for their reactions.



Choose the hook you think best fits your expository essay and add it to your outline from Lesson 4.

