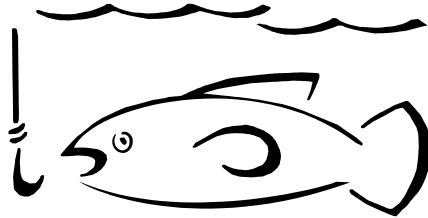


# Hooks and Attention Grabbers



**The first sentence of your introduction** is the first chance a writer has to **capture the attention** of the reader. Some people call this a “hook” because it captures a reader’s attention with interesting statements and ideas just like a fisherman will use a shiny lure to get a fish on his or her hook.

Just like a fisherman considers the kind of fish he wants to catch before he chooses a hook, **it is important to consider who your reader or audience is before you decide which type of attention grabber you will use for your essay.**

Once you have an interesting opening for your introduction, you should be able to introduce your topic then lead your reader gradually towards your main point – your thesis.

## Take a look at this example introduction paragraph:

How can a writer expect to get a reader’s attention without a good hook? The first sentence of an essay is often overlooked by writers, but readers depend on it to set the tone for the whole essay. Writing a good hook isn’t always easy, but it is an important skill to learn if you want to write effectively.

### Attention grabber:

How can a writer expect to get a reader’s attention without a good hook?

### Background information:

The first sentence of an essay is often overlooked by writers, but readers depend on it to set the tone for the whole essay.

### Thesis:

Writing a good hook isn’t always easy, but it is an important skill to learn if you want to write effectively.

# There are several different ways to grab the attention of your reader:

## A definition:

While dictionary definitions are ok, most people find them to be quite dry. Try to paraphrase or write your own unique take on a definition whenever you can.

## Example:

“When we intentionally make false statements, we lie. Lies are regarded as sins, vices, transgressions, and immoral offences.”

“Business is more than just an exchange of funds for services or goods.”

## A quotation or paraphrase:

If you use a quote, make sure that it is relevant to your topic, background information or your thesis in some way. Avoid over-used quotes or clichés, or if you must, try to put your own original spin on an old cliché.

## Example:

“The playwright George Bernard Shaw provided us with the memorable definition ‘Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.’ The film director Woody Allen took the definition one step further: ‘Those who can’t teach, teach gym’.”

“Everyone has heard the old saying “Time flies,” but I never expected the truth to be so literal.”

## A little known or striking fact:

Try to surprise and impress your reader with an interesting fact related to your topic. If it is a commonly known fact, people won’t be as interested in learning more. Don’t forget to cite your research!

## Example:

“A cockroach can carry more than 40 different pathogens that could spread to humans.”

“Of about 3 million youth that are injured every year playing sports or participating in recreational activities, only 25% are treated in hospital emergency rooms.”

## **A statement of opinion that you intend to challenge:**

No one can resist a bit of fair and healthy conflict. If you can challenge the reader's understanding of the world without alienating their beliefs or values, you have a good chance of getting their attention quickly.

### **Example:**

“Canadians cling to three myths about their country.”

“Most people think that writing is something that only those with a born talent can ever do well.”

## **An interesting incident or anecdote related to your subject:**

If you have observed or experienced something personally that can demonstrate why the topic interests you, then your reader will likely be interested as well.

### **Example:**

“At the supermarket where I work as a cashier, I classify my customers according to how they relate to me.”

“I am Korean-Canadian; but the hyphen often snaps in two, obliging me to choose to act as either a Korean or a Canadian, depending on where I am and who I am with.”

## **An explanation of why the topic is worth writing/reading about.**

Not every essay needs to start like a Dickens novel. Sometimes a general statement that pinpoints the key issue, fact, or observation that led you to choose your topic in the first place can interest the reader as well.

### **Example:**

“Students face all kinds of problems when they start college. Some students struggle with...”

“Students don't always remember what they were told at orientation.”

## **A question that will be answered by your thesis, or will catch the reader's attention and lead toward your thesis topic:**

Questions can immediately garner attention as long as the answer isn't immediately obvious or too obscure.

**Example:**

“Have you ever stayed up all night to study for an exam, only to sleep through your exam the next morning?”

“Why shouldn't everyone have access to free dental care?”

## **Still having trouble with attention grabbers?**

Try to think of what you find most interesting about the topic you are writing about and communicate that to your reader in a sentence or two.