

# Hooks and Attention Grabbers

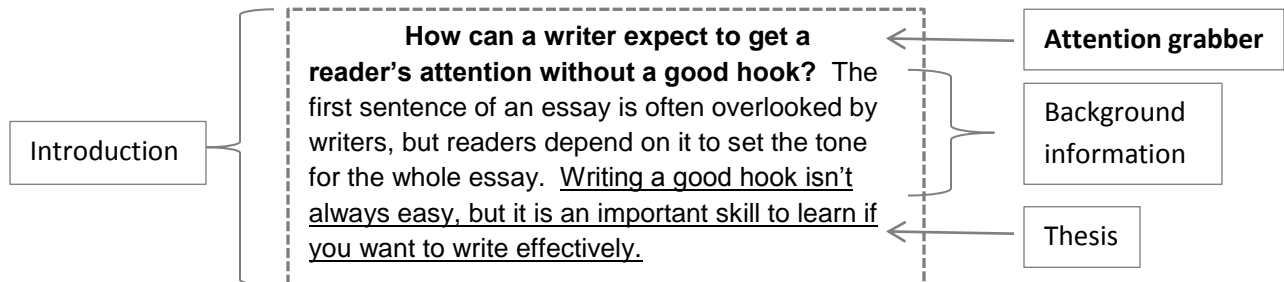
**The first sentence of your introduction** is the first chance a writer has to **capture the attention** of the reader. Some people call this a “hook” because it captures a reader’s attention with interesting statements and ideas just like a fisherman will use a shiny lure to get a fish on his or her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



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

**1. 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.

*“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.”*

**2. 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.

*“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.*

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## 3. 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!

*"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."*

## 4. 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.

*"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."*

## 5. 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.

*"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"*

## 6. 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.

*"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."*

## 7. 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.

*"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.