

Catchy Hooks



This list does not include every type of catchy hook that you can use in your writing. These are just some ideas to help you get started. Remember that some catchy hooks will work better than others depending on the type of essay you are writing (the same way some brainstorming methods work better for certain essays than they do for others).

1. RHETORICAL QUESTION

Open with an interesting question that relates to the main idea of your essay.

- ex: Have you ever wondered how you would survive if you were alone in the wilderness? How would you defend yourself against predators? What would you eat? Where would you find water?
- ex: Have you ever considered how many books we'd read if it were not for television?

2. RIDDLE

Open with a riddle that the reader can solve by reading further. You may want to give the answer right away or save it for the end of your essay.

- ex: What textbook has no pages, is miles wide, and smells like a creek? It's been around for millions of years. That's right--Outdoor School.

3. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Begin with a simile (comparison using like or as), metaphor (comparison saying one thing is another thing), personification (giving human characteristics to non-human things), onomatopoeia (a sound word).

- ex: The pencil sharpener was always hungry. It ate my pencil every time I went to sharpen it. It never seemed to do this to anyone's pencil but mine. What was so special about my pencils?

4. ANECDOTE

An anecdote is a short and funny story that can provide an amusing and attention-getting opening if it is short and to the point.

5. SCENARIO

A scenario can (and should) include sensory imagery and/or onomatopoeias to help the readers visualize and/or experience in their minds what you're talking about.

- Ex: The waves were ten feet high. The sound of booming thunder echoed as the waves crashed onto the shore. Danger lurked in the air, and it smelled our fear.

6. STATISTIC/FACT

Begin your writing with a true and interesting fact or statistic that will capture the reader's interest. This type of hook works best when it's an unusual or surprising fact or statistic. Remember to include the source of your statistic/fact.

- ex: According to the Guinness Book of World Records...
- ex: A recent survey stated that 73% of students who do their homework every day are straight A students.

7. DEFINITION

Open with a definition of a key word that relates to your essay. If you take the definition from a dictionary or textbook, be sure to use quotation marks and give credit to the source you got the definition from.

- ex: According to Webster's Dictionary, a government is "the authority that serves the people and acts on their behalf." However, how can the government know what the people want if the people do not vote?

8. HYPERBOLE (EXAGGERATION)

Open with a hyperbole (exaggeration) that relates to the main idea of your essay.

- ex: The whole world watched as the comet flew overhead.

9. DIALOGUE

Open with exciting or interesting dialogue (either spoken or a thought inside a character's head).

- ex: "It's my day at the beach, so if I don't do it now I never will," I thought to myself as I paddled to meet my destiny.
- ex: "What are you doing?!" my mother yelled as the pots and pans crashed to the floor around me.

