

DRAMATIC OPENERS—HOOKS

Dramatic openers are designed to grab the reader’s attention. A dramatic opener for a single paragraph is often a very short sentence placed before the topic sentence. More often, dramatic openers are used to begin an entire report or essay. In these, another very short sentence may also be placed at the end of the essay or report to remind the reader of the opening. These would then frame the composition.

Some examples of several different types of hooks follow. Each of them could work well in any type of composition—descriptive, narrative, or persuasive.

QUESTION	What is of more value than gold? <i>(essay on friendship)</i> Possible closing: A man with many friends is richly blessed.
STATISTIC/FACT	I was thirteen years old when I first visited our nation’s capital. <i>(essay about how a trip to Washington, D.C. was inspiring)</i> Closing: Now ten years later, I hope to return, not as a tourist, but as a lobbyist.
QUOTE	“We the people of the United States...” <i>(report on the Constitution of the United States)</i> Closing: The rights guaranteed by our Constitution ensure that the real power of the government is in the hands of the people.
SHOCK	Television is electronic heroin. <i>(essay on the dangers of too much T.V.)</i> Closing: Don’t become an addict.
SUSPENDED INTEREST (Leaves out important information to entice the reader to read on to discover the meaning)	No one has been able to explain the strange disappearances. <i>(report on the Bermuda Triangle)</i> Closing: We may never know.
AN IMPERATIVE (command)	Look into the heavens and count the stars if you can. <i>(report on outer space)</i> Closing: Man will never fathom the expanse of the universe.
FRAGMENTS	Kids. Kids everywhere. As far as I could see! <i>(narrative about the writer’s first job in a day care)</i> Closing: I learned to pray each day to have an impact on just one of those kids.
NAME DROPPING (famous names, places)	The statue of Liberty is a welcoming symbol of freedom. <i>(report on Ellis Island)</i> Closing: Immigrants from many lands know that special lady who greeted them.