



HOOKS

As you write your opening paragraph, try one these approaches (hooks) to grab the reader's attention:

Startling statistic, unusual fact, or vivid example: to inform, disturb, or surprise the reader's curiosity.

There were four Hannah's in my kindergarten class. Four. That's how I became Hannah M. **OR** A recent study alarmingly shows that U.S. lakes are losing their water mass by 13% each year.

Analogy & Comparison: comparing something the reader might be unfamiliar with or reject as uninteresting to something that is relevant or fascinating.

Threading a needle is a near impossible task. It requires laser vision and the patience of a saint. Scoring a goal in the upper left 90 is a lot like threading a needle.

Anecdote: story or interesting event to make it more alive to the reader.

I could see it on the shelf, and just as I placed my hand on the spine, someone else snatched the last copy of *Southern Home Recipes*. I turned to face the aggressor and expected him to surrender the book which was obviously mine. Instead he tugged harder, ripping the precious copy from my hands.

Description: vivid, detailed, sensory description to create a picture for the reader.

Bright cherry tomatoes show their red-bulb faces, and beside them a basket of blueberries gleam like sapphires.

Question: ask something that will grab the reader's attention to find the answer.

What would our world be like if there were no fossil fuels to burn? **OR** How many hours does it take to drive from Maine to Florida?

Irony or Humor: establish tone and voice from the onset of your composition.

Standing in the middle of the crowded cafeteria, in only my navy blue speedo, I knew I'd end up in the principal's office.

Startling Claim: an outlandish or even crude generalization can surprise or alarm the reader.

South Carolinians don't know how to drive.

Quotation or Dialogue: use an interesting quote or a bit of dialogue to surprise or seize the reader's attention.

"I'm surprised you like it."

"Yeah, it's good. What is it?"

"Tripe. You know, the lining of a cow's stomach."