

18 Hook Ideas with Mentor Text

Try these moves next time you begin writing!

Action: begin in the middle of an event

The two men appeared out of nowhere, a few yards apart in the narrow, moonlit lane.

- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling

Anecdote: an amusing or biographical tale

Ever since I can remember, I had wanted to know about the Land of the Golden Mountain, but my mother had never wanted to talk about it.

- *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep

Break the Fourth Wall: talk directly to the reader

Come visit one of the most magical places on earth.

- *A Journey Under the Sea* by Craig Foster and Ross Frylinck

Contradiction: point out the opposite of what most people think

Everyone knows that butterflies are pretty. But the real truth would surprise you. Some butterflies are gross.

- *Butterflies are Pretty Gross* by Rosemary Mosco (edited for the purposes of this handout)

Connect to Everyone: make a statement that applies to most human beings

Exploring the unknown: it's what humans do.

- *Lives of the Explorers: Discoveries, Disasters (and What the Neighbors Thought)* by Kathleen Krull and Kathryn Hewitt

Description: a “showing, not telling” description of a place, event, or character

America is a big country - a great whopper of a land from sea to sea, across tall mountains, wide prairies, and endless deserts.

- *Big Men, Big Country: A Collection of American Tall Tales* by Paul Robert Walker

Detail: an attentive, focused look at something in particular

On summer nights, the moon reaches right in through my window and paints itself across the ceiling in swirls and gleams of silver.

- *Where the Watermelons Grow* by Cindy Baldwin

Dialogue: a significant conversation between or among characters

“Where’s Papa going with that ax?” said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

- *Charlotte’s Web* by E.B. White

Emotion: a profound feeling

When we got the letter in the post, my mother was ecstatic.

- *The Selection* by Kiera Cass

Interesting Fact: some noteworthy evidence

Inside your head, behind your eyes, and under your hair is one of the coolest things about you: your BRAIN.

- *The Brain is Kind of a Big Deal* by Nick Seluk

Onomatopoeia: a sound that applies to your topic or scene

Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity, baripity, baripity – Good. His dad had the pickup going.

- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson

Setting: the time and place where action occurs

There was a time once when the earth was still very young, a time some call the oldest days.

- *The Search for Delicious* by Natalie Babbitt

Simile: compare two things using like or as

Like silent, hungry sharks that swim in the darkness of the sea, the German submarines arrived in the middle of the night.

- *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor

Single Word or Short Phrase: one powerful word or phrase that quickly orients the reader

Autumn now. The leaves here in New Hampshire are the ones on postcards – bright red and heartbreaking gold, color so deep and intense it seems it doesn't belong in nature.

- "Main Street" a short story by Jacqueline Woodson

Startling Statement: a shocking, astounding, extraordinary, or unusual statement

On the Pacific coast of North America, where the ocean meets the shore, there are forests that have no trees.

- *If You Take Away the Otter* by Susannah Buhrman-Deever

Thoughts: deep thoughts, worthy of note or thoughts from a character

I pace in our cell in Erudite headquarters, her words echoing in my mind: *My name will be Edith Prior, and there is much I am happy to forget.*

- *Allegiant* by Veronica Roth

Question: a query that elicits thinking about your topic or theme. Don't ask a question everyone already knows the answer to, unless you're setting up a contradiction.

What is a dream?

- *Congratulations, Who Are You Again? A Memoir* by Harrison Scott Key

Quotation: a famous quote, letter, poem, song, or scripture

"Books are a uniquely portable magic." – Stephen King

- *The Land of Stories: Beyond the Kingdoms* by Chris Colfer

This isn't all! As you read, write down other ways authors begin their writing: _____

Inspired by "Types of Introductions" (Medina, 2005) and expanded by Merideth Myers in 2023.