

Use Strong Opening Sentences

How to use: Print first for the main practice. Then use the device to repeat activities and save progress.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Write strong opening sentences that hook the reader
- 2 Identify strong opening sentences from among weak ones
- 3 Explain why weak opening sentences fail to grab the reader

MINI LESSON

The very first sentence of a paragraph is your one chance to grab the reader. A strong opening sentence makes the reader think, feel, or wonder — and it makes them want to keep reading. A weak one makes them want to stop.

What Makes an Opening Sentence Weak?

- It tells the reader what you are about to do instead of just doing it.
- Weak: I am going to write about volcanoes.
- Weak: This paragraph is about dogs.
- Weak: In this essay, I will tell you about space.

Four Ways to Write a Strong Opening

- Ask a question: Did you know that honey never spoils — even after 3,000 years?
- Share a surprising fact: Volcanoes can shoot lava more than a mile into the sky!
- Paint a vivid picture: The moment she stepped into the forest, she knew she was not alone.
- Make a bold statement: A single spark changed our town's history forever.

The Test

- After writing your opening, ask: Does this make me want to read the next sentence?
- If yes — it is a strong opener. If no — rewrite it using one of the four hooks above.

VOCABULARY

Opening sentence	The very first sentence of a paragraph — the reader's first impression <i>e.g. Did you know that a snail can sleep for three years?</i>
Hook	A technique that grabs the reader and makes them want to keep reading <i>e.g. Starting with a surprising fact is one way to hook the reader.</i>
Weak opener	A first sentence that announces the topic instead of hooking the reader <i>e.g. I am going to write about volcanoes.</i>
Strong opener	A first sentence that uses a question, fact, vivid picture, or bold statement to grab attention <i>e.g. Volcanoes can shoot lava more than a mile into the sky!</i>

Opening Sentences

Weak

I am going to write about volcanoes.

tells the reader what you will do

Boring!

Strong

Volcanoes can shoot lava a mile high!

hooks the reader with a big fact

Grabs you!

4 Ways to Hook Your Reader

Ask a Question

Did you know honey never spoils?

Surprising Fact

Volcanoes shoot lava a mile high!

Vivid Picture

The dark forest held a secret.

Bold Statement

One spark changed our town forever.

! Ask yourself: Can I name two ways to write a strong opening sentence and explain why "I am going to tell you about..." is a weak opener?

TRACING PRACTICE

Trace each sentence, then copy it once on the lines below. Each sentence should start with a capital letter and end with the correct mark.

TRACE

Start with a hook!

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

Grab the reader fast!

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

Ask a big question

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

Make them want r

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

Surprise your read

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

opening

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

sentence

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

hook

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

reader

COPY 1

COPY 2

TRACE

strong

COPY 1

COPY 2

Tip: As you trace each sentence, decide which hook technique it uses — question, fact, vivid picture, or bold statement.

EXERCISES — SORT & MATCH

Write each sentence under the correct heading — Strong Opening or Weak Opening.

SENTENCES TO SORT

1. Did you know that honey never spoils, even after 3,000 years?
2. I am going to write about butterflies.
3. The moment she stepped into the forest, she knew she was not alone.
4. This paragraph is about the ocean.
5. Volcanoes can shoot lava more than a mile into the sky!
6. In this essay, I will tell you about dogs.
7. Imagine waking up to find your backyard had turned into a jungle.
8. My topic today is the solar system.

Write the number of each sentence in the correct bucket below.

Strong Opening

Weak Opening

EXERCISES — MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. What is the purpose of a strong opening sentence?

- To summarise the whole paragraph before it is written
- To grab the reader's attention and make them want to keep reading
- To list all the facts that will appear in the paragraph

2. Why is "I am going to tell you about volcanoes" a weak opening sentence?

- Because it is too long and confusing
- Because it does not mention the topic clearly
- Because it announces what you will do instead of hooking the reader

3. Which opening sentence uses the question hook technique?

- "Did you know that a snail can sleep for three years?"
- "Snails are interesting animals that move slowly."
- "I am going to write about snails today."

4. Which technique does "Sharks have been on Earth longer than trees!" use?

- Asking a question
- Sharing a surprising fact
- Painting a vivid picture

5. Which opening sentence paints the most vivid picture?

- "Rainforests are found in warm, wet places."
- "My essay is about rainforests."
- "Thick mist curled between the towering trees as a scarlet bird screeched overhead."

6. Which opening sentence uses a bold statement?

- "The day I lost my dog was the longest day of my life."
- "Dogs can be trained to do many things."
- "I am going to tell you about a day I lost my dog."

7. Where does the opening sentence appear in a paragraph?

- In the middle, after at least two detail sentences
- First — it is the very first sentence the reader sees
- Last — it closes the paragraph with a strong finish

8. What is the best way to test whether your opening sentence is strong?

- Count the number of words — longer is stronger
- Check that it mentions the topic word at least twice
- Ask yourself: does this make me want to read the next sentence?

9. Which of these is a weak opening sentence?

- "In this essay, I will tell you about the rainforest."
- "A jaguar's spots help it vanish into the shadow of the jungle floor."
- "Did you know the Amazon rainforest makes 20% of the world's oxygen?"

10. How many main hook techniques are there for writing a strong opening sentence?

- Two — question and fact
- Four — question, surprising fact, vivid picture, and bold statement
- Six — one for every paragraph type

ASSESSMENT

PARENT / TEACHER CHECKLIST

- Correctly identifies the strong opening sentence when shown two examples side by side.
- Names the hook technique used in a given strong opening (question, fact, vivid picture, or bold statement).
- Explains why "I am going to tell you about..." is a weak opening sentence.
- Rewrites a given weak opening sentence using one of the four hook techniques.