



A hook is named for its ability to catch the reader's attention and make the reader want to read on. It is essential that stories, news articles, and especially essays begin with good hooks because a writer is often judged within the first few sentences. Just as the news tries to stimulate our fears by announcing a "danger in our water supply," a writer must try to bring the reader from his or her world into the world of the essay. This is done with a few choice words at the beginning of the essay: the infamous hook.

It is not easy to think of how to make someone want to read an essay about a novel. It's not even easy to make them want to read some novels. The key is to say something that the reader can relate to by bringing the **theme** of the novel you are discussing to the forefront and applying it to current "fascinating" topics of discussion.

Types of hooks:

Startling Statement

good and evil theme

All human beings are capable of the most gruesome crimes imaginable. It is only because of the customs and controls of civilization that we do not become brute savages.

Quote from Literature

Utopia theme

"But I like the inconveniences."

"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." BNW

Quote from Another Source

leadership or insecurity theme

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, which most frightens us." Nelson Mandela

Rhetorical Question

justice system theme

How would you feel if you found out that the murderer of the person you loved most in the world was about to be set free after only two years in prison?

Shocking Statistic

depression theme

On a recent anonymous survey, over ninety percent of high school males admitted to secretly enjoying the music of 'N Sync and to practicing their "hot dance moves."

Anecdote/Scenario

courage theme

A close friend of mine was in the Vietnam War and he admitted to me that he was terrified every time he had to go into battle. Even so, I consider him one of the most courageous men I have ever known. It is not the absence of fear that defines courage, but the ability of one to force oneself to take action in spite of fear.

Analogy

superficiality theme

The models that grace the pages of magazines seem to be better than anyone we have ever met: they seem elegant, untouchable, and perfect. But, just as magazine covers are manipulated to hide imperfections, we, too, sometimes fool ourselves into ignoring the flaws of individuals whom we have built up to be perfect beings.

Philosophical Musing

self-perception theme

Why is it that, if a person were to have his or her navel suddenly disappear, we would think that their stomach looked weird? I mean, that darn navel thing is pretty weird just being there, don't you think?

Humorous Musing

conformity theme

Why is it that, when I go to school with my underwear on my head, the world looks at me as if I were unusual? High school kids are so caught up in their little cliques that I feel like I've got to become one of those "underwear under the pants" types too. (Note: Humor is not appropriate for all classes and teachers. Use good judgment.)