

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION THAT HOOKS YOUR READER

First impressions are so important. How many times have you heard that? It is true that the first impression—whether it's a first meeting with a person or the first sentence of a paper—sets the stage for a lasting opinion. To get your paper off to a great start, you should try to have a first sentence that engages your reader. Think of your first sentence as a hook that draws your reader in. It is your big chance to be so clever that your reader can't stop.

EXAMPLE 1

What has two short arms, two short legs, a small head and a tiny mouth that makes more noise than a bulldozer or an elephant in pain? According to my mother, it was me as a baby. What I lacked in size (I was only four pounds at birth), I made up for in my loud screaming. In fact, the sounds I made were so constant and irritating that my parents started calling me "Grogger" like the noisemaker used to drown out Haman's name at Purim. Then, on my first birthday, I took a breath to blow out the candle and the screaming stopped. How I became one of the calmest and quietest adults remains a mystery to my family who remembers that first year with dread. My journey from annoying "Grogger" to the yoga master and tai kwan do expert I am today is nothing short of miraculous.

Why this works _____

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**EXAMPLE 2**

As I watched the final few minutes of the documentary *Making a Difference*, it was hard to hold back the tears. Here I was in a theater filled with hundreds of movie-goers who had no idea that the subject of the film they watched about a young doctor who solved the malaria problem in Africa was sitting in their midst. The film was especially moving for me because it was the story of my life and the incredible opportunity I had as an infectious disease specialist to change the course of history. I wasn't always a lab rat working day and night to find a vaccine to prevent malaria. My younger years were wonderfully carefree. In that theater I rejoiced in all that I had accomplished and remembered back to my childhood when my grandfather first told me about the epidemic that was claiming the lives of so many innocent souls and his challenge to me to make a difference.

Why this works \_\_\_\_\_

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### EXAMPLE 3

I was born on the back of a snowmobile! Most people make it to the hospital, some are born at home and there are even a few who are delivered en route to the hospital pulled over in a taxi cab on the side of a road. But despite my very early and rather abnormal entry into this world, I am a pretty regular guy which proves that you can start out anywhere, even stuck with wheels spinning in a snow bank, and end up moving forward. I'm pretty proud of what I accomplished and forever grateful to the stranger who noticed my mom toppled over with her cross-country skis pointing straight up in the air and knew enough to call the ski patrol.

Why this works \_\_\_\_\_

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EXAMPLE 4

Mount Kilimanjaro with its gleaming glaciers, stands majestically amidst vast open plains, inviting you to the challenge to climb to the top through the farms and rain forest, to pass through the moorland to highland desert and to witness the eternal snow on "The Roof of Africa." It's a breath-taking sight both literally given the height and figuratively as well. As my 30th birthday present to myself, I felt I had made an exceptional achievement. While I took in the natural beauty and the self-satisfaction of a job well-done, I remembered the moment I first learned about Kilimanjaro and made a secret commitment to myself to climb it one day.

Why this works _____

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### EXAMPLE 5

"Life is a bowl of cherries." I heard that phrase a hundred times, but it has taken me until now to fully appreciate its meaning. My life has been filled with endless choices, most resulting in sweet results. However, there have been those times when I took a big bite out of the cherry of life and found the taste to be sour and the pit to be bitter. Those times have been few, fortunately, and I have always been blessed with great people who supported me through the rough spots. Now as a teacher, I help the next generation make good choices so that they end up picking more ripe cherries than sour ones from their bowl of life.

Why this works \_\_\_\_\_

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