



How to Hook Your Audience: Academic Essays

A-State Online Writing Center

A hook is a sentence or series of sentences that grab the attention of the reader and make them interested or curious about the essay's contents. All forms of writing can benefit from a captivating hook. Moreover, there are a variety of ways to capture a reader's interest, from making a strong, assertive claim to posing a thought-provoking question.

General Tips & Strategies

Consider the Title

Titles can also serve as a part of a hook. Think of when you conduct research or you're searching for a book to read. Titles matter because they convey the purpose of the piece and/or leave readers with questions regarding the content matter. Consider how the title can engage readers without convoluting the subject matter. Of course, incredibly technical content is more black and white, but essays in the humanities disciplines can often possess more leeway.

Example: [PopTherapy: coping with stress through pop-culture](#)

The title is intriguing overall, and the subtitle is evergreen as the masses consume pop culture and navigate stressful situations. The reader may be tempted to learn how pop-culture can serve as a therapeutic device.

Make a Strong Claim

Engage your reader by asserting a strong statement that is connected to your thesis statement. These claims will be supported by evidence throughout the paper, with counter-arguments in place as well. Whether or not your reader initially agrees with you, they may be interested in your argument.

Example: ["Nutrition is a major environmental influence on physical and mental growth and development in early life."](#)

List an Interesting Fact or Statistic

Facts and statistics offer credibility to your argument and can surprise the reader, making them curious to read more of your paper. However, make certain you take them from reliable sources. Otherwise, your ethos as a writer is compromised, and readers can easily dismiss your work.

Example: “[According to the current statistics available from the World Health Organization, around 47 million people have dementia, with 9.9 million new cases being diagnosed every year.](#)”

Choose a Powerful Quote

Introduce your essay with a memorable, relevant quotation that you can source. Once again, ensure the individual you’re quoting made the statement by researching credible sources. However, beware of quote websites, as they may be mistaken.

Example: “In his novel *No Name in the Street*, James Baldwin stated, ‘It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have’ (x).”

*x = page number in MLA format in this example

Pose a Question

Pose an interesting question that relates to your paper to tempt readers to read onward in order to find out the answer.

Example: [How and by what means is race ascribed to an animated body?](#)

This question is fairly broad and can pertain to any race and any animated character, and it potentially discusses numerous areas of study that may intrigue readers.

Works Consulted

<https://www.academicwritingsuccess.com/7-sensational-essay-hooks/>

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/tips-for-writing-an-attention-grabbing-hook#what-is-a-hook>

<https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules-and-tips/writing-advice-and-tips-on-how-to-engage-the-reader.html>

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