

LESSON 4: THE OPENING LINE



With so much competing for reader’s attention, the opening line is critical for hooking the reader and getting them to read on. A great opening line sets the tone, creates curiosity, and compels the audience to keep reading.

“A book won’t stand or fall on the very first line of prose — the story has got to be there, and that’s the real work. And yet a really good first line can do so much to establish that crucial sense of voice — it’s the first thing that acquaints you, that makes you eager, that starts to enlist you for the long haul. So there’s incredible power in it, when you say, come in here. You want to know about this. And someone begins to listen.”

—Stephen King

How do you capture the reader’s attention and pique their curiosity?

- Make the reader wonder what’s coming next
- Tell a Story
- Be direct
- Use a quote
- Be conversational
- Set up conflict
- Statistics
- Ask a question

Techniques and Tips

- Write your first line last
- Delete your first paragraph
- Start with a story
- Think about your tone and purpose



CHALLENGE

Read an article of interest to you, (or use the piece you are writing yourself) and re-write the opening sentence using one of the methods or techniques discussed.

Email your challenge to laurelnakai@gmail.com by Aug 22