

How to Hook a Reader

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How to Hook a Reader

Here are 2 examples of how not to start a story.

1. Sam ran down the tar-paved ribbon of highway. He whistled a tune that the breeze carried away. His copper hair rustled in the timid wind.

2. The sun licked Sam's bare shoulders. Sweat trailed down his chest and dripped onto the pavement. The trees stood as still as statues. The russet, canary yellow and orange leaves hung limply from craggy branches.

Both are good descriptive paragraphs, but could stop a reader from reading further. If the stories continue with pure description, the reader will become bored and put your story or book on the shelf. When we rewrite a paragraph or story, state a problem and tie in action to grab a reader's interest. Look at the changes to the two paragraphs below.

1. "Sam likes Misty. Sam likes Misty," Andrea chanted.

"Mind your own business," Sam growled and punched the air. The heat rose in his cheeks. His sneaker-clad feet pounded the pavement as he raced from the group of giggling girls. His breath came in heaving gasps.

2. The drought carried into late October. Without rain the crops died. The sun licked Pete's bare shoulders. Sweat trailed down his chest and dripped into the cracked earth. He wished for a cloud to shield him from the stabbing rays of the sun. Cows looked to the blue sky as if in hope of spotting a cloud. The pond had been dry for months. The well provided dirty brown water. Without rain the farm would die like the corn in the field. The trees stood as still as statues. The russet, canary yellow and orange leaves hung limply from craggy branches.

Do you want to know what happens next? Both paragraphs are better, because they are active and state a problem.

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Write two action packed paragraphs that state a problem to hook a reader using the descriptive paragraphs as prompts.

1. Sam ran down the tar-paved ribbon of highway. He whistled a tune that the breeze carried away. His copper hair rustled in the timid wind.

2. The sun licked Sam's bare shoulders. Sweat trailed down his chest and dripped onto the pavement. The trees stood as still as statues. The russet, canary yellow and orange leaves hung limply from craggy branches.