Writer’s Workshop
Mini-Lesson 1:
Attention-Getters/Lead Sentences

“Bait your hook and lead them in.”

Reading and English
Conrady Junior High School
North Palos School District 117
Basics...

Three Types of Writing:

• Narrative

• Expository

• Persuasive/Argumentative
What is an Attention-Getter [AG]/Lead Statement?

• A technique designed to **intrigue readers** at the beginning of a writing piece

• Builds the **reader’s interest**

• It “gets” your “attention,” hence the title “attention-getter” (😊)

• You must lead your attention-getter smoothly into the rest of the introduction.
Examples of Attention-Getters/Lead Statements:

- Rhetorical Question
- Direct Quotation
- Anecdote (or story or incident)
- Elicit Reader’s Emotion
- Statistics
- Figurative Language Statements
- Contrast
- Definitions
- Other
Rhetorical Question

- Asking a **QUESTION** to your **AUDIENCE** that addresses the **CONCEPT** or **MAIN IDEA** of your essay topic
- **Example:** Do you believe that the school day should be extended?
- Currently, students attend school from 8:00 AM until 2:30 PM and are dismissed for the rest of the afternoon to play sports, hang with friends, complete homework, and eat dinner with their families. **Do you believe that extending the school day another two hours would be beneficial for our students?** Let’s keep it real. There is only so much reading, writing, and arithmetic's that our students can take before crashing and hitting a wall. Two more hours of school is preposterous and should not be condoned!
Rhetorical Questions...Now You Try?

**Prompt**: Should students be able to carry their IPods on them during the school day? Should teachers allow IPods to be part of the educational experience?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
One More Example...😊

• Have you ever felt the sharp pain of glass rip through your chest? Or the pressure of an airbag inflate as your head was thwarted forward, aiming towards the windshield? Or have you ever felt the crashing “thud” of your vehicle as the truck behind it slammed it’s brakes .2 seconds too late, only to propel your car into the Jeep Liberty parked in front of you...
Writer’s Workshop Exercise:

Write an introduction with the attention-getter of “rhetorical question” selecting any of the following prompts:

- Anxiety of Big Tests
- School Uniforms
- Teams at the Junior High School Level
- Standardized Tests as a Placement Tool
Direct Quotation

• Start with a **DIRECT QUOTATION** from a **FAMOUS PERSON, A RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY, OR A LITERARY SELECTION**

• Example:

“What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?” Such are questions posed by poet Langston Hughes, but what truly happens when we forgo our ambitions and dreams? Unfortunately, for many teenagers their dreams are halted because of unfortunate circumstances such as poverty and poor family conditions...
Direct Quotation

- **Authority:** "Drinking kills more young drivers than any other cause," says John Smith, head of Wisconsin highway safety. "Their corpses litter the highways of America every night." Sadly, many think that there is nothing they can do about this except have their own designated driver or take friends' and family members' keys away. However, studies have shown that cell phones save more people from drunken driving than most people would imagine.

[http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/faculty/lcarothers/EffectiveWriting/Reflective/Attention%20Getters.pdf]
Direct Quotation (continued)

**Literary Selection:** "Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet... along came a spider..." She was lucky it wasn't a brown recluse spider. Now found as far north as Wisconsin, this spider sports a nasty bite that unless treated correctly can cause death. It's easy to avoid being bitten by following these steps.

- **Famous person:** Beloved American author Mark Twain once said, "Man is the only animal that blushes... or needs to." My brother is living proof of this observation. He has perfected the art of "putting his foot in his mouth" on any occasion.

  [http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/faculty/lcarothers/EffectiveWriting/Reflective/Attention%20Getters.pdf]
Prompt: Discuss the implications of Michael Jordan leaving the NBA and being “replaced” by others such as “King James” and Kobe Bryant. Was this inevitable? Or is MJ still the best?
Anecdote or Story Snippet

• Paint a picture in the reader’s mind of your topic or your position on a particular topic.

• **Example:** The young driver turns up the stereo louder and smiles as he dreams of the fun he had at the party—plenty of good music and beer. Suddenly a tree appears from out of nowhere. He grabs at the wheel to turn the car. Headlights swerve in the darkness. But it's too late. A patrol car screams to find the twisted body of another kid who drank and drove. Teenagers need to understand the effects of alcohol on their adolescent bodies.

• [http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/faculty/lcarothers/EffectiveWriting/Reflective/Attention%20Getters.pdf]
Anecdote or Story Snippet

• The day was finally here. I stood nervously in line, waiting in anticipation for the man in the charcoal suit with the blue tie to call my name. Butterflies danced a new tune of nerves in my stomach as I wiped a bead of sweat off my forehead in the school gymnasium. Seriously...we’re in the 21st century and still no air conditioning. I fixed my tassel once again, looked at the ugly orange robe I had donned, and thought about those four long, though memorable years, that I had walked to and from class at Alonzo A. Stagg High School. Today I closed the door on years of intense studying, fun parties, shameful driver’s ed “bloopers,” if you will, tears, smiles, and success; but I was opening a new door towards the unknown...
Anecdote...Now You Try!

- Select an experience and provide a snapshot of that experience, the anecdote, in your introduction.

- ______________________________________

- ______________________________________

- ______________________________________

- ______________________________________

- ______________________________________

- ______________________________________
Elicit Reader’s Emotions

• **Use Humor, Satire, Horror, or Other Emotions to Provoke your Reader**

• **Humor (Exaggerate):** Our neighbors have all moved away — again, and it's all Mom's fault — again. Their subtle hints and then outright criticism went right over her head. First it was Christmas wreaths in July, and then it was plastic eggs in December. Leaving holiday decorations up during the wrong season can cause many problems.

  [http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/faculty/lcarothers/EffectiveWriting/Reflective/Attention%20Getters.pdf]
Elicit Reader’s Emotions

**Satire** (poking fun at society for something using sarcasm)

**Example: Ebay Song**

You got a D on your math test. *That’s ok. Try harder next time.*
You forgot your science homework. *That’s ok. I will call your school and explain everything.* You are running the mile tomorrow. *That’s ok. I will write you a note and you can sit out of gym class.*

Wake up, mothers and fathers! The real world will not pat your child on the back and tell them that everything will be alright. Nor will they write your little sunshine a note asking his or her professor to accept late work. We are creating a generation of lackadaisical, excused-ridden adults with little to no ambition to compete in the global market...
Horror

They are everywhere, lurking in your spice cabinets. Snoozing in the warmth of your bedroom drawers. Or crawling in moist places throughout your residence. They have long, segmented bodies and one hundred legs. Though your home is equipped with security systems to protect against robbers, thieves, and vile criminals, your house is not centipede proof. One sting from these repulsive creatures and you can be paralyzed...
Elicit Emotion...Now You Try!
Statistics

- Use statistics to draw your reader into an interesting or heated topic.
- Usually “shocking” or interesting statistics
  http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/
- Example:
- 750 million disciples...and no I am not talking about the number of believers in the Good Lord Jesus Christ. Though some individuals adhere to it as a god, it is inanimate and one click away from connecting your BFF in Florida to your Great Aunt Lucy in Ireland. Yes, Facebook is here to stay and ever-growing in millions!
Figurative Language

• Begin with a:
  • Simile
  • Metaphor (Extended Metaphor)
  • Personification
  • Idiom
  • Hyperbole
  • Onomatopoeia
  • Pun (play on words)
Figurative Language

• From “Sweet Potato Pie”
  “From up here on the fourteenth floor, my brother looks like an insect scurrying among other insects. A deep feeling of love surges through me. Despite the distance, he seems to feel it, for he turns and scans the upper windows, but failing to find me, continues on his way…I turn from the window and flop down on the bed, shoes and all. Perhaps because of what happened this afternoon or maybe just because I see Charley so seldom, my thoughts hover over him like hummingbirds…”

From “The Secret Lion”
“I was twelve and in junior high school and something happened that we didn’t have a name for, but it was there nonetheless like a lion, and roaring, roaring the way the biggest things do. Like the rug, the one that gets pulled- or better, like the tablecloth those magicians pull where the stuff on the table stays the same but the gasp! from the audience…”
Examples: Variety is the Spice of Life

• A dog is worth the indigestion. Beads of mustard and ketchup. Heaps of onions and relish tinselled with a shower of sauerkraut. Yes, the stadium hotdog is a work of art.
• The garnishes for stadium hot dogs are either crown jewels or a crown of thorns depending on the strength of your stomach.
• Double, double, toil and trouble. Your stomach may bubble and toil after a stadium hotdog with the works.
• "A dog is man's best friend, at least, if you're talking about stadium hot dogs," said Mary Jordan, concession manager. "Our customers are almost all males."
Now You Try...

The First Day of School...
Definitions:

Provide a definition of a word or concept relevant to the theme or topic of the text

School is an institution responsible for the upbringing of the youth. It is a place of academic flowering. Some, however, may argue that contemporary schools are more like prisons...

Contrast...

• Describe a scenario that is the opposite of your topic with the intention of persuading your author to believe in your point of view

• **Example**: Children running around the neighborhood, eating ice cream and vending machine junk food. Flipping through mindless channels on cable television. Sleeping until 2:00 in the afternoon. And “chilling” with friends at the skate park. Quite the inactive lifestyle! Unless we mandate year-round schooling, our children are bound to be lazy, illiterate bums who will never read a darn word all summer, expect perhaps the hogwash on the back of the cereal box. Year round schooling is a necessity for our upcoming generation.
More Examples:

A third-grade class gallops through a daisy-filled meadow with butterfly nets. A ninth-grade Latin class floods the zoo for a lesson in scientific names. High school seniors ride the Demon at Great America for physics class. (TS) A field trip may look like time set aside for fun and games, and most students prefer them to regular classes, but serious examination will show that they educate in a way textbooks and lectures never can.

If you think being big is the name of the game in the NBA, you're right. (Some may think being big is the name of the game in the NBA, and they are right.) The typical pro basketball player looks like a skyscraper wearing size 18 sneakers. But that doesn't mean there isn't room for the little guy with big talent. (TS) Muggsy Bogues. at 5'5" tall. Has played an integral part in the success of his team.

The adrenaline rush that accompanies a fast, successful run down the ski hill stays with skiers a long time. They feel alive and powerful as they take on the mountain. However, that feeling can be short-lived, literally, if they don't take suitable precautions. (TS) Skiers must respect the rules of the ski hills and use common sense to ski safely.

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