

A **narrative hook** (or hook) is a literary technique in the opening of a story that "hooks" the reader's attention so that he or she will keep on reading. The "opening" may consist of several paragraphs for a short story, or several pages for a novel, but ideally it is the opening sentence.

Narrative Hook	Example
<b>The Puzzler</b> —raises questions that puzzle the reader	<i>I'm never really sure if it's a real memory or just something that's become more solid over time. But I'm sure that my brother once tried to murder me.</i>
<b>The Salesperson</b> —stops the reader in their tracks and addresses them directly	<i>So you want to know all about me? Well, stay there and I'll begin...</i>
<b>The Hinder</b> —the subtle approach, drops hints so the reader has to put the pieces together	<i>It wasn't as if we hated each other. I don't really think he knew what he was doing. I wasn't much better.</i>
<b>The Weatherman</b> —sets the atmosphere	<i>The sky was a shade of midnight, the pavements shined with drizzle and reflected lights from lamp-posts and car headlights. I splashed along in my cozy rainboots.</i>
<b>The Painter</b> —paints a visual image of the scene	<i>My apple red rainboots shone as they splashed through the puddles on the black tar pavement. Multi-colored cars raced past, cutting through the drizzle and the dark of the winter night.</i>
<b>The Comedian</b> —the funny approach	<i>Being splashed by a car moving so quickly that you are soaked to your underwear is really funny. Unless it happens to you.</i>
<b>The Interrupter</b> —brings you in during a conversation.	<i>"I can't believe he did that! What happened next?" Liz demanded...</i>
<b>The Scientist</b> —uses an interesting fact or piece of data to begin	<i>Shock has been known to kill ten year olds. It can cause their brains to explode and their heart to stop dead still. These facts came to mind as I stood dumfounded in front of my fourth grade classmates. I wish I had stayed in bed!</i>

"Novalee Nation, seventeen, seven months pregnant, thirty-seven pounds overweight—and superstitious about sevens—shifted uncomfortably in the seat of the old Plymouth and ran her hands down the curve of her belly."—*Where the Heart Is*, Billie Letts

"Dust cakes our faces, invades our sinuses, and stings our eyes. The heat bakes the moisture from us with utter relentlessness. Our body temperatures hover at a hundred and three. Our ears ring. On the edge of exhaustion, we get dizzy as our stomachs heave."—*House to House-A Soldier's Memoir*, David Bellavia with John R. Bruning

"I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my fahver."—*Push*, Sapphire (The novel that inspired the film, "Precious")

"My high school friends have begun to suspect I haven't told them the full story of my life."—*A Long Way Gone, Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, Ishmael Beah

"This is how Mortimer Tate ended up killing the first three human beings he'd laid eyes on in nearly a decade:"—*Go-Go Girls of the Apocalypse*, Victor Gischler