

How to start an essay with a hook | Essay Tips

Hello and welcome to my channel where I talk a little bit about theatre, a little bit about being a PhD student and a little bit about those two things put together. Since I started this channel I've done a couple of videos where I've shared some tips or advice on writing essays or doing research from some of the things that I've learned over the last couple of years. And, from the comments, it sounds like they've been quite useful to a lot of people. And so I thought I'd turn it into a proper little series where I do some essay tips. Obviously, if that sounds good and you're not already subscribed, then please do consider doing so. But, without further ado, here is the first proper, official episode of Essay Tips. It's often said that first impressions count and that's as true for an [why nyu essay sample](#) or a paper as it is for a human. Whether you're writing a paper for it to be marked or for publication either in an academic journal for an online blog or something, you want your first line to really make a great impression. You want those first few sentences to really grab your readers attention, to let them know that, however many other things they've read today, whether they're marking things or just browsing through the Internet, that this is going to be the killer one. At the same time, you also want to give them some kind of indication of what the essay is going to be about, as well as providing some rationale for you writing about that thing. In this video I wanted to collect together a few ideas for how you can best grab your reader's attention when they start to read your essay. So, here are my five top tips for starting an essay. Number one: start by telling us what it's about. Now, granted, starting an essay with the sentence "In this essay I will" is not the most thrilling use of the English language. But I wanted to point out from the start that it is a perfectly valid way to start an essay. You've probably spent a lot of time and effort choosing the subject matter of your essay and so it's possible just to let it speak for itself. Some topics are just naturally really interesting. If you're writing an essay about why humans should have hands for feet and feet for hands then as soon as you start that sentence I'm going to want to read the rest of your essay. And not all subject will be as exciting as that one that I just made up but it's worth saying that, after

you've done a lot of reading about a certain subject, you can forget how exciting that topic that you've chosen is. So, sometimes, it's okay just to let your subject matter speak for itself. Number two: start with a quote. So, assuming this is an essay for undergraduate level or above, you're going to be citing a lot of other people's research during your essay; so why not start with one a quote? If you're writing the humanities particularly, your essay is essentially going to be a kind of debate between lots of different ideas, so why not pick one of the more contentious ones and you can start your essay with that and follow up by either agreeing or disagreeing with it. That way this debate runs all the way through your essay and we get a sense of what it's going to be from the very, very start. Number three: tell us about a recent event. So, part of your job as a researcher or academic or essayist is to explain to us why the subject matter that you've chosen is important to us now, today and here. One great way of communicating this is to start off by letting us know about a recent event that your subject matter or topic can let us know a little bit more about or can explain a little bit better to us. Perhaps sightings of stingrays have shot up recently or perhaps they've dwindled massively; if your essay is about stingray psychology then perhaps you can tell us a little bit about why that is. Also, if you're writing a history essay, even if you're writing about like Roman politics, you might be able to tell us how that relates to contemporary politics. You should always be able to find a way that links the subject matter of your essay from whenever it was about to now or from wherever it's about to here, and if you can start off with that then we'll instantly know why we should pay attention to what you've got to say within your essay. Number four: start with a personal story. So, presuming you had some kind of choice in what your essay was going to be about, there's probably quite a personal reason why you thought that would be interesting. Perhaps you've loved the Star Wars films ever since your mum or dad took you to see them when you were younger. Perhaps you were staring out the window when you saw a cyclist and you wondered how the bicycle was invented. It's perfectly valid to start your essay by telling us this story. Many proper, bona fide academic books do this. Essentially, what you're doing is you are telling us why the

subject matter matters to you and, therefore, allowing us to identify through that. Often, if you can explain to us why this subject matter matters to you, we will identify that through you and then will care about it as well. Number five: is just start. Now, this may seem obvious but sometimes there is nothing more terrifying than a blank white page in front of you. It often feels like, as soon as you start putting words down, that's the point at which you might put the wrong words down and I often find it very easy to creep back to reading because, although even the most difficult books can be quite a difficult time trying to read them, it's definitely nowhere near as exposing as actually doing writing. In creative writing there's this phrase don't get it right get it written and that's certainly something I'd apply here. In this age of computers it's so easy to go back and edit stuff and I think what you'll find is, once you start writing, it will eventually become difficult to stop. And you can always go back and edit that first line or that second line or any of it again later. Never be afraid to start writing because if you don't start then you'll never finish. This has been the first video of Essay Tips, let me know if you've enjoyed it down below. Perhaps you've got some tips how you like to start an essay, I certainly don't pretend to be a massive expert, it'd be great to have a little conversation. Obviously, if you like the video, give it a thumbs up and it would be great to see you again with another one these videos soon. Have a great week!