Writing the Hook

By Gay Miller
Begin with dialogue. Use quotations either between two characters or have the narrator talk directly to the reader.

Begin by asking a question to get the reader thinking.

Begin with a vivid description. Be sure to use specific details that paint a picture.

Begin with an interesting fact. This can be a shocking statement.

Begin with a sound that is associated with the action that is taking place in the first scene of the story. [Onomatopoeia]

© Gay Miller
“Hurry or you’ll be late!” called my mother from the bottom of the stairs. “Today of all days you want to be on time.” If I had only known what that day would bring, I would have stayed in bed.
Have you ever had a day when you wished you had stayed in bed? As I rushed to catch the bus on what seemed to be a perfectly normal day, I had no idea what was ahead of me.
The sun was warm on my back as I raced toward the waiting yellow school bus. As I nestled into the worn leather seat, I was greeted by the friendly voices of other excited kids. The look on my face was one of confidence and contentment. With a jerk the bus rumbled down the road, and I was on my way to one of the worst days of my life.
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 raced through my mind as I stood dumbfounded in front of my fifth grade classmates. I wish I had stayed in bed!
“Buzzzzzzz!” The sound of my alarm clock droned in my ears as I struggled to come awake. With a start, I sat straight up in my bed. This was my big day, and I had to be on time.
"Yes," said Tom bluntly, on opening the front door. "What d'you want?" A haraessed middle-aged woman in a green coat and felt hat stood on his step.

[Goodnight Mister Tom by Michelle Magorian]

"Where's Papa going with that axe?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

[Charlotte's Web by E.B. White]

The Iron Man came to the top of the cliff. How far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where had he come from? Nobody knows. Taller than a house, the Iron Man stood at the top of the cliff, on the very brink, in the darkness.

[The Iron Man: A Children's Story In Five Nights by Ted Hughes]

Knock. knock. knock.

[Weasel by Cynthia DeFelice]
It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seonee hills when Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, scratched himself, yawned, and spread out his paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

[The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling]

Once on a dark winter's day, when the yellow fog hung so thick and heavy in the streets of London that the lamps were lighted and the shop windows blazed with gas as they do at night, an odd-looking little girl sat in a cab with her father and was driven rather slowly through the big thoroughfares.

A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett

It was so glorious out in the country; it was summer; the cornfields were yellow, the oats were green, the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows, and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his good mother.

The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson

My mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. It was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue. I was wearing my favorite shirt - sleeveless, white eyelet lace; I was wearing it as a farewell gesture. My carry-on item was a parka.

Twilight by Stephenie Meyer
The pretty little Swiss town of Mayenfield lies at the foot of a mountain range, whose grim rigged peaks tower high above the valley below.

[Heidi by Johanna Spyri]

Most motorcars are conglomerations (this is a long word for bundles) of steel and wire and rubber and plastic, and electricity and oil and gasoline and water, and the toffee papers you pushed down the crack in the back seat last Sunday.

[Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang by Ian Fleming]

Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped down into a little hollow, fringed with alders and ladies' eardrops and traversed by a brook that had its source away back in the woods of the old Cuthbert place"

[Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery]

Brian Robeson stared out of the window of the small plane at the endless green northern wilderness below.

[Hatchet by Gary Paulsen]
The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world.

[The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson]

All children, except one, grow up.

[Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie]


[The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper]

Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity, baripity, baripity—Good.”

[Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson]
Here is Edward Bear, coming down the stairs now, bump bump bump bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin.

[Winnie-the-Pooh by A.A. Milne]

Marley was dead, to begin with.

[A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens]

“Christmas won’t be Christmas without presents,” grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

[Little Women by Louisa May Alcott]

“Hello. I am Ivan. I am a gorilla. It is not as easy as it looks.”

[The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate]
## Answer Key

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