

# Ways of Opening a Story



# Lesson Objective

To Investigate Different Ways of Opening a Story.

## Success Criteria

- To analyse and compare several different story openings.
- To practise opening your planned story.

# What Should a Story Opening Do?

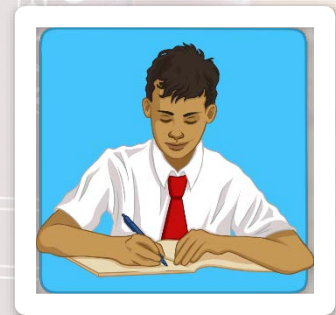
Think of some of your favourite story openings. Individually or in pairs, consider what a good story opening should do.

It should grab your attention;

It should leave you with questions;

It should make you want to keep reading!

This is called **“hooking the reader”**.



# Analysing Five Story Openings

You will each be given an activity sheet with five story openings.

Read each of them and decide how the extract is trying to make you read on.

Do you know where any of the extracts are from?

# First Story Opening

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

“Out to the hoghouse,” replied Mrs Arable, “Some pigs were born last night.”

“I don’t see why he needs an axe,” continued Fern, who was only eight.

“Well,” said her mother, “one of her pigs is a runt...”

What technique is this story opening using?

How does it make you want to keep reading?

# Second Story Opening

One afternoon, when Bruno came home from school, he was surprised to find Maria, the family's maid – who always kept her head bowed and never looked up from the carpet – standing in his bedroom, pulling all his belongings out of the wardrobe and packing them in four large wooden crates, even the things he'd hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else's business.

What technique is this story opening using?

How does it make you want to keep reading?

# Third Story Opening

MARLEY WAS DEAD, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon exchange for anything to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.

What technique is this story opening using?

How does it make you want to keep reading?

# Fourth Story Opening

You've probably never heard of Vincenzo Perugia. But we all know about him. He was a famous art thief and we used to be in the same line of work. My sister Minnie even had a picture of him on her bedroom wall. She reckons that when Vincenzo stole the Mona Lisa from the Louvre museum in Paris on 21 August 1911, that was the most immensely perfect crime ever.

What technique is this story opening using?

How does it make you want to keep reading?



# Fifth Story Opening

The villagers of Little Hangleton still called it ‘the Riddle House,’ even though it had been many years since the Riddle family had lived there. It stood on a hill overlooking the village, some of its windows boarded, tiles missing from its roof and ivy spreading unchecked over its face. Once a fine-looking manor and easily the largest and grandest building for miles around, the Riddle House was now damp, derelict and unoccupied.

The Little Hangletons all agree that the house was ‘creepy.’ Half a century ago, something strange and horrible had happened there.

What technique is this story opening using?

How does it make you want to keep reading?

# Feedback

Feedback on some of the ways these story openings draw you in.

Can you think of any other way to open a story that are not used here?

Which ones were your favourite and least favourite?  
Put them in order from A-D with A being your favourite. Explain your choices.

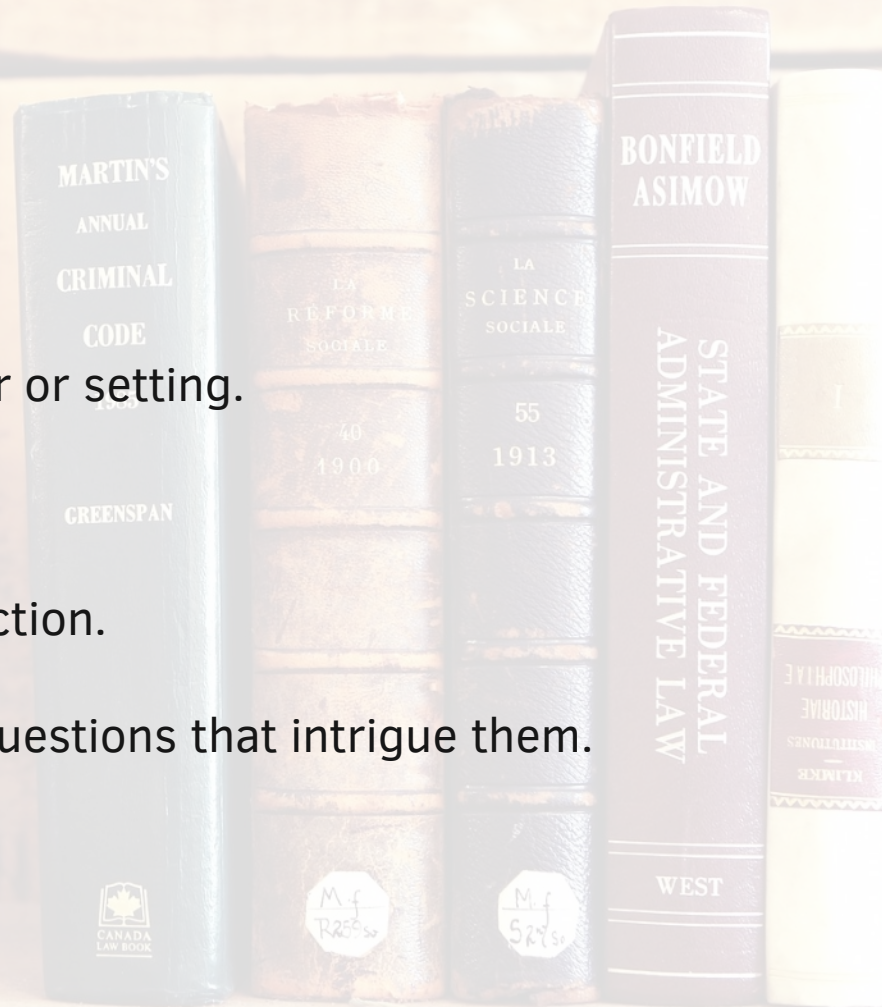
Do you know any of the books these openings were from?

**The extracts were from the following books:**

Charlotte's Web; The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas; A Christmas Carol; Framed and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.

# Some Ways to Hook the Reader

- Open with a Question.
- Dialogue.
- Description of character or setting.
- Dramatic statement.
- Start in the middle of action.
- Leave the reader with questions that intrigue them.



# Your Story Opening

Think back to the story you have planned.

What would be the most interesting way to open your story?

You have ten minutes to write a story opening suitable to your story.

## **Extension:**

**Write another type of opening for the same story and decide which you prefer.**



# Peer/Self Assessment

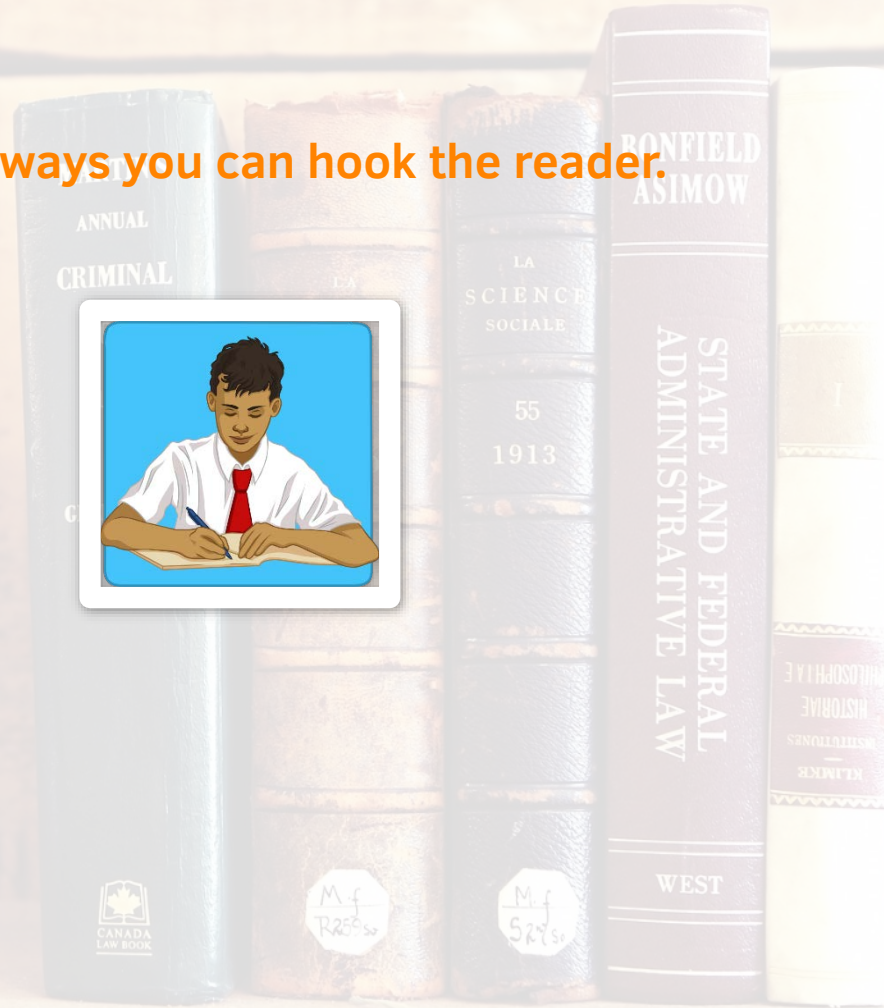
## Did your story...

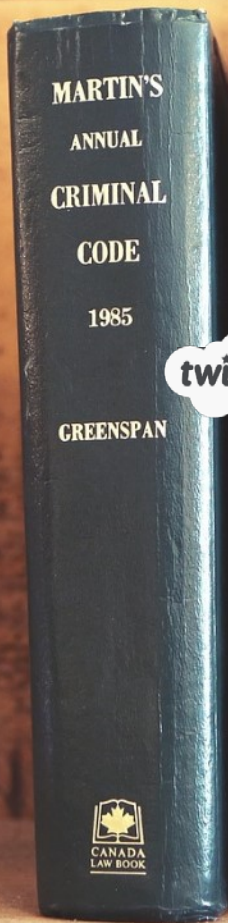
- “Hook” the reader?
- Start with a question?
- Start with dialogue?
- Start with description of character or setting?
- Leave the reader with questions?
- Start in the middle of the action?



# Plenary

Write down at least three ways you can hook the reader.





MARTIN'S  
ANNUAL  
CRIMINAL  
CODE  
1985  
GREENSPAN

twinkl



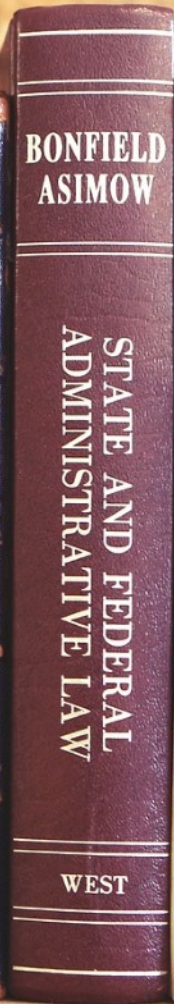
LA  
REFORME  
SOCIALE  
40  
1900

M.f  
R289s



LA  
SCIENCE  
SOCIALE  
55  
1913

M.f  
S29s



BONFIELD  
ASIMOW  
STATE AND FEDERAL  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW  
WEST



KIMMER  
HISTORIAE  
PHILOSOPHIAE