

# Ways of Opening a Story

Read each of the following story openings. How and why do they make you want to read on? Pick out some words or phrases for each that are particularly effective. You may want to copy or stick these activities into exercise books.

## Extract 1

“Where’s Papa going with that axe?” Said Fern to her mother as they were setting down 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...”

**Technique/ Ways it makes you want to keep reading** -----  
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## Extract 2

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.

**Technique/ Ways it makes you want to keep reading** -----  
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## Extract 3

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.

**Technique/ Ways it makes you want to keep reading** -----  
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**Extract 4**

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.

**Technique/ Ways it makes you want to keep reading** -----  
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**Extract 5**

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.

**Technique/ Ways it makes you want to keep reading** -----  
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Rank these extracts in order of preference from A-D with your favourite number first and your least favourite last.

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What are the reasons for your choices? -----  
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**Peer /self assessment (after writing your own opening paragraph)**

Did you or your partner use any of the suggested techniques?	Would it make you want to keep reading? Yes/No/Comments	What did you like about it?	Suggestions for improvement.