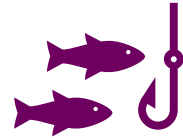


Fulbright-Hays DDRA Narrative Writing Tips: The Hook

(Make the most of your first impression!)

The hook is the first few lines of your narrative—as you undoubtedly remember from high school composition classes and college writing labs. The hook should draw the reader in, getting their attention and making them want to read more. There are different ways to approach writing your hook.



Types of Hooks¹

Interesting question

- Ask a question that relates to your topic.
- Make sure the question can only be answered by reading the rest of your proposal.

How can Vietnamese farmers in the biodiverse Mekong Delta combine traditional farming methods and new techniques to adapt to erosion brought about by upstream dam development?

What role did the *Sotsialisticheskiy Realizm* (Socialist Realism) doctrine play in shaping the contemporary art of 1960s Eastern Europe?

Strong statement or declaration

- Write a sentence or two making an assertive claim about your topic.
- Make sure the claim connects to your research question.

Systemic racism drastically undercuts sexual and reproductive justice worldwide.

Black pepper—from unassuming, wrinkled little peppercorns—is the world’s most important spice.

Fact or statistic

- Begin with an interesting fact or statistic related to your topic.
- Make sure it comes from a credible source.

In September 2024, Uganda was hosting over 1.74 million refugees and asylum seekers, 57 percent of whom were children.

By 2020, the Global South accounted for 73 percent of agriculture production across the world, up from 44 percent in 1961.

Metaphor or simile

- Write a metaphor that directly compares your topic and something different (with which the average reader will be familiar).
- Or use “like” or “as” to compare your two ideas in a simile.

Children’s art is like a window, allowing viewers a glimpse into their lives. The art produced by Syrian children in Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp depicts hope and horror, dreams and disaster.

The light notes of the bamboo *dra* float over the lush green rice paddy, a gentle breeze of peaceful melody drifting from the farmer’s flute.

Story

- In a couple of sentences, share a personal story that introduces your topic.
- You can also write an anecdote that you have heard from someone else.

On our seventh day of hiking, my friend Adimu and I reached Uhuru Peak, sweat soaking our backs despite the surrounding Kilimanjaro snow. We surveyed the highland desert boulders below, seeing where they gave way to the forest zone we had walked through days before. I knew then I would return to Tanzania.

Decades ago, water flowed freely from underground springs in the Coqimbo region, and goats thrived on the semiarid steppes. Now, Julieta Cortés, president of the Rural Women’s Association of the municipality of Canela, says her family has had to cut the size of their herd by three quarters.

Description

- Write a vivid description of a scene or setting that draws your readers into the narrative.
- Make sure the description ties clearly into the rest of your topic.

The bride was radiant in her richly embroidered *ghagra* skirt, a light silk *dupatta* floating around her heads and shoulders, and countless gold bangles encircling her slim hennaed wrists.

The sun dipped below the horizon into the sea, reflecting glorious pastel oranges and pinks onto the plastic bags and soda bottles littering the beach as waves lapped gently at the sand.

Quotation

- Begin your proposal with a powerful, striking, or memorable (and verified!) quote, using quotation marks to present the person’s exact words.
- Make sure the quote is clearly linked to your research topic.

In a 1990 speech in Boston, Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.” But how can the South African education system—characterized by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and relatively poor educational outcomes—hope to empower its students to live out Mandela’s belief?

Noted molecular biologist, nutritionist, and public health advocate Marion Nestle has observed that “Food is political. Because everyone eats, everyone has a stake in the food system.”

Example hooks from successful past MSU DDRA applicants

The Hausa proverb *tsohon gatarinka ya fi sari ka ba ni* translates to English as “your old axe cuts better than what you give me.” As a parallel form of reasoning, this proverb captures the self-sufficiency of Hausa leatherworkers in the Volta Basin, an area that comprises present-day Burkina Faso and Ghana. Rather than bring an “old axe” from their places of origin in Northern Nigeria, the leatherworkers brought an old technology for tanning animal skins that transformed the economy and society. During the early twentieth century, Hausa leatherworkers settled in towns in the Volta Basin where they experimented with changes to their old technology, improving the quality and increasing the quantity of tanned animal skins available in local markets. The tanned skins became inputs for a burgeoning craft industry that incorporated leather

In April 1961, Mao Zedong spoke to African delegates in Beijing, saying: “We do not have a clear understanding of African history, geography, or the present circumstances, so a concise book is badly needed.”¹ Mao stated that he would “invite African friends to help” fill in what was then a glaring lack of knowledge about Africa in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). My dissertation investigates how some of these African friends – Cameroonian delegates whom I theorize as “citizen diplomats” – helped mediate Chinese knowledge about Africa and contributed to Maoist theories of imperialism. Scholars have generally assumed that the PRC

Introduction

Language learner and teacher investment: Second language literacy practices in Japan

“Study abroad is the single most effective way of changing the way we view the world.”

~ Chantal Mitchell

Outside of the U.S., students, teachers, and researchers are encouraged to study abroad (SA); however, less than 1% of American students study overseas (NAFSA, n.d.). Despite efforts to increase the number of U.S. students studying overseas, such as the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act, barriers such as the COVID-19 pandemic have decreased numbers even further. SA remains a central and understudied issue in U.S. university education.

Proposed Project

This multi-purpose ethnographic dissertation research will explore a) Japanese L2 learners’ literacy practices, b) L2 student investment through the lens of authentic materials and authentic/imagined communities, and c) perceptions of learner investment and L2 literacy

There is a land in the northeastern corner of this continent known as *schoodic*, or “the burned place” in Passamaquoddy, the language of the indigenous people of this land. This land yields a perennial wild blueberry harvest, which attracts us - migrant farmworkers, their families, and educators of the migrant education program - from across North America. We are a seasonal community, formed through our repeated annual migrations to the blueberry harvest. We leave behind our homes in Mexico, Eskasoni First Nation, and other parts of the U.S. to meet each year at the blueberry harvest in Maine and learn together at its summer migrant education program called the Seasonal Harvest School (SHS). I have been a part of the blueberry harvest community and SHS as an educator and researcher for nine years.

Although the United States has long considered Latin America to be its sphere of influence, China’s growing political and economic power is reconfiguring longstanding geopolitical alignments and economic ties of the western hemisphere. These changes have not gone unnoticed and fears of “the voracious dragon” emerged in political speeches, academic analyses, and the news. These narratives echo past racist tropes of the “yellow peril” but also illuminate current anxieties about China’s emerging role as an economic power. While political pundits and institutional spokespersons can publish their views on these changes, gauging public opinions on these matters is challenging. At times public opinions are visible due to protests, but these cases are rare. Understanding public opinions on China’s role in the region is still important since it influences political and economic decisions of governments and institutions and potential public support or backlash. Since China’s influence can be associated with a variety of activities such as infrastructure projects, import of cheap goods or migration, it is

¹ Types and bullet points modified from: <https://www.academicwritingsuccess.com/7-sensational-essay-hooks/>