Writing Hooks -- Baiting the Reader...

Hook: A hook is a statement with the sole purpose of getting the reader’s attention. Get in the mindset of thinking that a hook is the tip of the iceberg. It is only the start of a thorough and logical discussion of a topic in an essay. Therefore, you have to present your very best in attracting the reader’s attention at the very beginning of your essay.

1. **Open with an unusual detail or statistic, startling or striking fact from an authoritative source** – Thirteen teachers, two students and one police officer killed in a Munich, Germany high school; thirteen students killed and dozens wounded in Littleton, Colorado at Columbine High School...
2. **Open with a strong statement** – Cigarettes are the number one cause of lighter sales in Canada!
3. **Open with a quotation** – Elbert Hubbard once said, “Truth is stranger than fiction.”
4. **Open with an anecdote** (Anecdotes are stories, from your own experience or someone else’s, told to make a point.) – When I studied education before becoming a teacher in the early 90s, my professors were dead set against lecturing, worksheets and memorizing facts for the test, but those were still the methods they employed, and the ones I saw in use during my practicum. We as teachers know that education must be engaging and relevant to be effective, and that the learner must be actively involved in the construction of knowledge for anything to stick. I know of no study that shows standardized testing to increase student learning. What I know is that there is no multiple-choice question that can measure the kind of learning that really changes people.
5. **Open with an engaging question** – What more would you know if there were no television?
6. **Open with an exaggeration or outrageous statement** - Hey! Do you hear a kind of groaning sound? Could it be ...? Yes, it's millions of kids marching off to take some standardized tests!

-Taken from Portland Public Schools
Writing a Thesis Statement

**Thesis statement**: This is a single, specific claim that your essay supports. It includes a topic, a precise opinion, and reasoning. This statement can be backed up by “proof” (quotes) from the text being analyzed or examples or facts relating to your main point.

**A strong thesis:**
1. Takes a stand
2. Generates discussion
3. Focuses on one main idea
4. Clearly answers the prompt

**Four hints for writing strong thesis statements:**
1. Use a dependent (subordinate) clause
   - *because* *since* *although*
   - *when* *while* *in order that*
   - *through* *even though*

2. Don’t use “you”
3. Don’t use: “In this paper”; “I think”; “I believe”; “I will show you”
4. Should be one sentence

**If you’re still stuck, try this:**
“In William Shakespeare’s tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, ____________ drives the story because….[three examples]