

from a feature news story, perhaps something from *National Geographic* or a news magazine. Ask students to identify how the writer grabs the reader's attention. What detail or use of language makes the reader want to know more and therefore read the rest of the chapter or article?

- Explain that narrative hooks are important in both fiction and nonfiction books and articles. Authors often spend a great deal of time working and reworking their opening paragraphs because they know if the readers isn't hooked early on, the reader may not stick around to read the rest of the story. Relate this information about narrative hooks to their own writing, including their LAL letters.
- Distribute reading-writing worksheet F. Read and discuss the strategies identified for writing narrative hooks.
- Distribute reading-writing worksheet G. Emphasize the importance of both an introduction and a conclusion in writing. The opening may hook the reader, but the conclusion makes some significant point about what has been learned.
- Conclude the activity by reading some closing lines from books or news magazines in order to identify different strategies authors use to bookend their stories.

ANSWER KEY

How to Hook the Reader in 25 Words or Less

1. The reader-writer wanders all over the place. The opening paragraph isn't focused. To improve, focus on one of the details presented here, perhaps a catchy line from the reader-writer's own sci-fi story and then attribute its inspiration to the author.
2. The reader-writer provides information available elsewhere—salutation, etc. but also summarizes the theme of the contest. To improve, the reader-writer should either link some interesting detail about his or her school to the book or simply cut this unnecessary information and follow one of the strategies listed above.
3. The opening line is cute but not as powerful or grabby as it could be. To improve, the reader-writer might compare/contrast his or her real-life adventures to Huck's or focus on special detail of Huck's adventure.

Bookends

1. Decisions is the main idea emphasized.
2. Jonas provides the reader-writer with insight on

how to make the right decisions.

3. Unlike Jonas, she doesn't repeat the key word "decisions." Instead, she presents the concept that reading is a puzzle. She mirrors that in the closing paragraph by using the word "muddled." In the opening she wonders why people escape into others' lives through books. In the closing paragraph, she answers her own question—to gain greater understanding of self and situations.
4. Walking through the shoes of a character who experienced cancer. In the body of her letter, which is not here but can be access by logging onto the Library of Congress Website, Anna explains how her mother died of cancer and she struggled with accepting that. The helped her to understand what happened not only to her mother but also to herself during those tragic period.
5. She lists things that make her happy.
6. She selects a quote by the main character and uses it to close her letter, explaining that what Matilda believes is what she, too, believes.

A FINAL NOTE! Discussion will vary but should focus on the main idea that while the writer addresses the author, i.e. "your book" in the opening and "you wove" and "your characterization" in the closing, the passages are not personal or reflective of the reader. The reader-writer is analyzing the book, not responding to it.

LESSON 4: ASSESSMENT

Use this activity to introduce students to the Letters about Literature theme. Lesson is written

MATERIALS

- All Levels: Writing Worksheet H—A Word about Vocabulary
Level I: Letter Writing Rubric
Levels II, III: Assessment Checklist

PROCEDURE

- Warm up by asking students to imagine how judges will assess the letters submitted. Ask:
Do you think the judges read every letter?
What do judges look for in a winning letter?
Why might a judge eliminate a letter?
- Ask students to work in pairs or groups of three or four. Distribute writing worksheet H. Read the opening passages and ensure students understand the reasons why writers' words become tied or