**Writing Notes: Hooks and Introduction Paragraphs (Four Steps)**

* Hooks are statements meant to “hook” your reader’s attention!
* They are the very first sentence of an essay (if you choose to use one).
* HOOK and THESIS are NOT the same thing; you still need a thesis but it will come AFTER the hook.
* You need at least THREE sentences in the intro: in between the HOOK and THESIS, you need a COMMENTARY sentence (you can also call this a TRANSITION sentence).
* Keep intros SHORT on STAAR essays. Intro (Hook/thesis) should be no longer than 3-4 lines.
* **STEP ONE:**
* DECIDE ON A THESIS FIRST on your brainstorming paper. I’ll explain why later.
* **STEP TWO: WRITE DOWN YOUR HOOK. (1st sentence of intro paragraph):**

Here are nine options for creating a hook (Let’s say your example essay topic is explain the characteristics of true love):

1. Use a surprising statistic (Use this only if you have access to facts, or you have a good memory).

Ex: Every year, over 100,000 couples get married in Las Vegas

2. Ask an interesting rhetorical question (try not to repeat the prompt)

Ex: Is love simply a result of chemical reactions in our brains?

3. Present a very short story (anecdote) or image with sharp details. USE BRUSHSTROKES!

Ex: When my parents first met, my mother was wearing a yellow sundress which complimented her blue eyes and tanned skin. *Stunning my young father with her beauty*, she looked just like his vision of an angel.

4. Use a shocking, controversial statement/observation.

Ex: Many fools equate love with sex.

5. Use a famous quote (INCLUDE AUTHOR”S NAME if you can!).

Ex: Oscar Wilde said, “Men always want to be a woman's first love. Women have a more subtle instinct. What they like to be is a man's last romance.”

6. Say something short and shocking/unexpected/paradoxical.

Ex: Love hurts. OR Love is hate.

7. Bring up a common saying/piece of advice.

Ex: Many people say that love is blind.

8. Create a metaphor or simile. Compare the topic to something concrete.

Ex. Love is like a rollercoaster**:** even though it has its ups and downs, people always come back for more.

9. Give general background information or facts about the topic (use for history essays, literary analysis essays, etc.)

Ex: Love, as defined by Webster’s dictionary, has ten definitions, the first being…

* **STEP THREE: COMMENT ON YOUR HOOK. (2nd sentence of your intro paragraph.)**
* Comment on the hook. It can be as short as a sentence. Do you agree or disagree with your hook? Why are you bringing this up? In general, elaborate on the hook.

Ex. Let’s say you chose Method #7. Bring up a famous saying. Your hook plus comment could look like this:

(HOOK:) Many people cynically say that love is blind. (COMMENT:) This is not always a negative thing because sometimes we need our loved ones to forgive our mistakes and turn a blind eye, so to speak.

* **STEP FOUR: ADD YOUR THESIS. (Last sentence of intro paragraph)**
* Add your thesis after the comment. You might need to add a transition word.

Ex:

(HOOK:) Many people cynically say that love is blind. (COMMENT:) This is not always negative—after all, no one is perfect, and sometimes we need our loved ones to ignore and forgive our errors. (THESIS:) Therefore, one characteristic of true love is the ability to look past small flaws.

\*\*\* REJOICE!! YOU ARE NOW DONE WITH YOUR INTRO PARAGRAPH. START YOUR BODY PARAGRAPHS NOW.

Warnings:

\*\*\*IMPORTANT: Create your HOOK only AFTER you have decided upon a THESIS, or else you may try to force using a hook that doesn’t work with your thesis.

Example: (HOOK) Love is like a rollercoaster**:** even though it has its ups and downs, people always come back for more. (COMMENT:) Soaring one moment, then plunging the next, some people develop an addiction for the high that new love brings. (THESIS:) Therefore, one attribute of true love is the ability to look past small flaws..

CLEARLY, this hook doesn’t go with this thesis.

\*\*\*IF YOU ARE TAKING TOO LONG creating a hook, STOP. It’s ok to leave it out. Just get on with the actual essay. A THESIS AND WELL DEVELOPED EXAMPLES are MUCH more important than a fancy introduction.