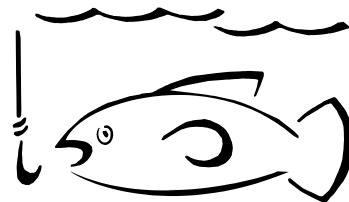


## Writing an Effective Hook for a Literary Analysis

The first few sentences of your essay are important because they serve three very important functions:

- 1) Grab your reader's attention
- 2) Present the main idea (in this case, *theme*) in your essay
- 3) Establish yourself as a knowledgeable source and talented writer

There are a number of ways to begin your essay. Consider one of the options listed below or create your own idea that accomplishes the three tasks listed above.



### UNIVERSAL IDEA

All leaders carry the responsibility of making difficult decisions—decisions that can greatly impact the lives of those they lead.

### ANECDOTE/SITUATION FROM THE LITERATURE

Returning home from a hard day's work, the laborer enters his home to find strangers feasting on his stores of food. They make themselves comfortable and quickly work their way through the feast he had been saving for himself. In such a scenario, it is difficult to blame him for not lavishing them with gifts and offering them the hospitality they are clearly expecting.

### HYPOTHETICAL ANECDOTE FROM REAL LIFE

A great leader knows how to inspire those who follow him. When stuck in what seems to be a hopeless situation with no way out, people want a leader who can raise their spirits.

### POWERFUL DECLARATION

Intelligence is superior to physical strength. Always.

### ANALOGY

Successful coaches do it all the time. They find a way to take a random group of individual athletes and turn them into a cohesive unit—a team capable of much more than any one player is alone. All people in positions of leadership are essentially coaches who are trying to maximize the potential of their team.

### PHILOSOPHICAL MUSING

Justice is a virtue for which most cultures strive. But what happens when justice is not really as blind as it should be?

### VIVID DESCRIPTION

Penniless, companionless, lost, and heart-broken, a sailor washes up on the shores of a foreign land. Gathering his feet under him and his emotions within him, he begins to weep for the men who would never again see their homeland.

### QUOTE FROM THE LITERATURE

He is a king, soldier, sailor, and fearless leader—a man “skilled in all ways of contending” (956).

*\*Note: Your “hook” will likely be 1-3 sentences. Be sure to move smoothly to your transition sentence(s).*



Think of your introduction like a funnel. As you move from the hook to the thesis, you also move from general statements about your universal theme toward a specific argument about the theme's significance in *The Odyssey*. Your introduction begins broad, but becomes very specific by the time you've reached your thesis.