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**Writing**

**An**

**ATTENTION-GETTER**

**“Bait Your Hook and Lure 'Em In.”**

**ATTENTION-GETTER:** Many people don't like to read essays because they aren't engaging. A lot of essays are full of dry facts and statistics, and people can't always relate to them. One way to help engage readers and make them want to read your essay is with a strong attention-getter. An attention-getter is at the beginning of your introductory paragraph. They're used to draw your reader in and hook him to want to keep reading.

In this packet, you will discover a variety of possible attention-getting strategies and examples of each. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Please feel free to develop your own attention-getting strategies.

**Please Note:** More than one attention-getting strategy can be used together to create a complete attention getter in one essay!

**DO NOT BEGIN WITH A QUESTION.**

1) You're opening up the possibility for readers to say, "No," and then they will tune you out.

2) Often they are boring and cliché and it has been thought of before! Be creative.

**IF YOU FIND YOU HAVE USED A QUESTION, JUST CHANGE IT INTO DECLARATIVE STRUCTURE.**

**Nope:** Have you ever thought that dogs' tails are really neckties for their butts?

**Yup:** Most people have probably never considered that dogs' tails are really neckties for their butts.

**ATTENTION GETTER STRATEGIES**

* **Begin with a direct quotation –** *from a recognized authority, a famous person, or a literary selection*
* **Begin with a broad, general statement of your topic and narrow it down to your thesis statement.**
* **Begin with an idea or situation that is the opposite of the one you will develop.**
* **Begin with a verbal picture that relates to the topic –** *try to avoid using “Picture this…” or “Imagine this…” though*
* **Begin with asking a series of questions.**
* **Begin with an incident or anecdote.**
* **Begin with a startling statement, fact, or statistic –** *to arrest the readers’ attention to surprise, horrify, anger, or amuse them into reading more.*

**EXAMPLES**

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***Begin with a broad, general statement of your topic and narrow it down to your thesis statement***

**Bookstore shelves are crammed with dozens of different diet books. The American public seems willing to try any sort of diet, especially the ones that promise instant, miraculous results. And authors are more than willing to invent fad diets to cash in on this craze. Unfortunately, some of these fad diets are ineffective or even unsafe.** One of the worst is the Palm Beach diet. It is impractical, doesn’t achieve the results it claims, and is a sure route to poor nutrition.

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***Begin with an idea or situation that is the opposite of the one you will develop***

**When I decided to return to school at age thirty-five, I wasn’t at all worried about my ability to do the work. After all, I was a grown woman who had raised a family, not a confused teenager fresh out of high school. But when I started classes, I realized that those “confused teenagers” sitting around me were in better shape for college than I was. They still had all their classroom skills in bright, shiny condition, while mine had grown rusty from disuse.** Going back to school later in life was difficult because I had totally forgotten how to locate information in a library, how to write a report, and even how to speak up in class discussions.

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***Begin with a startling statement, fact, or statistic***

**Diseases like scarlet fever and whooping cough used to kill more young children than any other cause. Today, however, child mortality due to disease has been almost completely eliminated by medical science. Instead, car accidents are the number one killer of our children. And most of the children fatally injured in car accidents were not protected by car seats, belts, or restraints of any kind.** Several steps must be taken by parents, police, and car manufacturers to remedy this serious problem of child deaths due to car accidents.

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***Begin with an incident or brief story***

**Early Sunday morning the young mother dressed her little girl warmly and gave her a candy bar, a picture book, and a well-worn stuffed rabbit. Together, they drove downtown to a Methodist church. There the mother told the little girl to wait on the stone steps until children began arriving for Sunday school. Then the young mother drove off, abandoning her five-year-old because she couldn’t cope with being a parent anymore. This incident is one of thousands of cases of child neglect and abuse that occur annually. Perhaps the automatic right to become a parent should no longer exist.** Would-be parents, instead, would be force to apply for licenses granting them the privilege of raising children. They need to be able to prove their responsibility level, their financial stability, and they should have to know the basics of childcare.

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***Begin by asking a series of questions***

**What is love? How do we know that we are really in love? When we meet that special person, how can we tell that our feelings are genuine and not mere infatuation? And, if they are genuine, will these feelings last?** Love, as love involves far more than mere physical attraction. It involves mutual respect, the desire to give and take, and the feeling of being wholly at ease.

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***Begin with a direct quotation***

**“Fish and visitors,” wrote Benjamin Franklin, “begin to smell after three days.”** Last summer, when my sister and her family came to spend their two-week vacation with us, I became convinced that Franklin was right. After only three days, I was thoroughly sick of my brother-in-law’s corny jokes, my sister’s endless complaints about her boss, and their children’s constant invasions of our privacy.

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***Begin with a verbal picture that relates to the topic***

**The young driver turns up the stereo louder and smiles as he dreams of the fun he had at the party—plenty of good music and beer. Suddenly a tree appears from out of nowhere. He grabs at the wheel to turn the car. Headlights swerve in the darkness. But it’s too late. A patrol care screams to find the twisted body of another kid who drank and drove.** Teenagers need to understand the effects of alcohol on their adolescent bodies, effects such as inhibiting memory, motor skills, and coordination, creating life-long alcohol dependence, and even causing life-long brain damage.

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***Additional Attention-Getter Examples***

The absent-minded professor has nothing on Principal Robert Shaw. Shaw drove his new white Oldsmobile Cutlass into his regular parking space on Tuesday morning at 7:30 only to discover that the space was covered with fresh tar. Only the day before Shaw himself had warned students not to use this parking lot because of the scheduled resurfacing.

Eight years ago doctors told Janet Cushing’s parents that she would most likely not recover from the brain damage she received in a bicycling accident. Saturday the Cushings watched as their daughter walked away as the state champion in extemporaneous speaking.

Charley Grissom studied family history, underwent plastic surgery, changed his accent, and learned how to play the violin. And he fooled everybody but the FBI.

Herman the squirrel finally lit up the sky in a big way, but don’t look for a repeat performance right away, at least not from Herman.

With a thunderous roar, a rocket rises into the dark carrying a message from earth to some form of intelligent life out in the vast cosmos. A waste of effort? Perhaps, but it stirs the blood to think that we may not be alone.

A dog is worth the indigestion. Beads of mustard and ketchup. Heaps of onions and relish tinseled with a shower of sauerkraut. Yes, the stadium dog is a work of art.

Loretta had been working as the tattoo artist’s assistant for only two weeks and already he had designs on her. She had no choice, though, to put up with it because a hob’s a job. Or is it? Some jobs require employees to do tasks that are fit only for Satan. *(Pun)*

The sixth great glacial age descended on the United States last year. Though it rabidly left most other regions, the minds to the students at Harbor High have been frozen solid ever since. *(Hyperbole)*

There it is again – the Siren song. When I hear it, no carbohydrate in the house is safe from me: candy, chips, and best of all, chocolate cookie dough. That’s what I get for starving myself. Losing weight is much easier without a stringent diet. *(Allusion)*

Mom says no, but he doesn’t have that two-letter word in his vocabulary. In fact, she knows that, so why she doesn’t just tie him up and lock him in his room still baffles me. He was lucky this time, though. This time he only broke his ankle. My 9-year-old brother, in some way related to Harry Houdini, definitely has a mind of his own and has escaped with is life on too many occasions.

“Drinking kills more young drivers than any other cause,” says John Smith, head of Wisconsin highway safety. “Their corpses litter the highways of America every night.” Sadly, many think that there is nothing they can do about this except have their own designated driver or take friends’ and family members’ keys away. However studies have shown that cell phones save more people from drunken driving than most people would imagine. *(Quotation from authority)*

“Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet…along came a spider…” She was lucky it wasn’t a brown recluse spider. Now found as far north as Wisconsin, this spider sports a nasty bite that unless treated correctly can cause death. It’s easy to avoid being bitten by following these steps. *(Quotation from literary work)*