

10. I am learning to use other similar writing as a model for my own.

Think about the following questions:

- What questions do you ask yourself?
- What do you find out?
- Why is it effective?

*e.g.*

'The sun does not go down.

This is the first thing that Eric Seven notices about Blessed Island. There will be many other strange things that he will notice, before the forgetting takes hold of him, but that will come later.'

What questions do you ask yourself?

- Why does the sun not go down?
- Who is Eric Seven?
- What is the Blessed Island? Where is it?  
Why is he there?
- What are the other strange things?

What do you find out?

Eric Seven is on an island - Blessed Island. There is something strange about this island.

'The sun does not go down.

This is the first thing that Eric Seven notices about Blessed Island. There will be many other strange things that he will notice, before the forgetting takes hold of him, but that will come later.'

Why is the opening effective?

It gives you clues that something interesting will happen. It leaves you asking questions you want to find out the answer to. The opening begins with a short sentence, which is powerful.

## Task

Have a look at these famous story opening examples and complete the table.

Look at the border to find your table:  
pink, orange or green.

| Opening   | Questions you ask yourself | How the opening is effective |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| "Honestly, Mrs Hadley," said Meggie McGregor, wiping her eyes. "That sense of humour of yours will be the death of me yet!"   |                            |                              |
| Jasmine Hadley allowed herself a rare giggle. "The things I tell you Meggie. It's lucky we're such good friends!"   |                            |                              |
| The boy with the fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way towards the lagoon. Though he had taken off his school sweater and trailed it now from one hand, his grey shirt stuck to him and his hair was plastered to his forehead. All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat." |                            |                              |
| When the doorbell rings at three in the morning, it's never good news.  |                            |                              |
| Alex Rider was woken by the first chime. His eyes flickered open but for a moment he stayed completely still in his bed, lying on his back with his head resting on the pillow. He heard a bedroom door open and a creak of   |                            |                              |
| It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his chest in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.   |                            |                              |

How did they engage the reader?

What did you notice about the story openings?

- Dialogue to introduce the character
- Short powerful sentence
- Suggesting something exciting/bad is going to happen
- Detail and description with exciting vocabulary

## Task

Choose one of the story ideas on the next page and write an engaging opening using the techniques you have looked at today.

You may want to refer back to this when you write your own narrative!

A family move into a new house which they soon discover is haunted by an evil spirit.

**Useful vocabulary:**  
dark, menacing, sinister, uncertain, atmosphere

A thirteen-year-old girl is bullied at school, but then discovers she has a talent for football and is picked to play for the county. Suddenly, she is popular.

**Useful vocabulary:**  
cruel, lonely, victim, scared, angry

In an alternate reality, robots are used to do housework. But Ben starts to suspect there is something wrong with the robot his family own - it's more intelligent than they think.

**Useful vocabulary:**  
machine, artificial intelligence, menial tasks, sinister, ability