

The How-to-hook-your-reader toolkit

You might want to	How to do it	What to avoid
1. Change words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select precise words Name it <i>bird – flamingo; tree - oak</i> Tighten the wording: <i>the blood was pouring – blood poured</i> Try something new: <i>The sunny moon</i> 	<p>Don't over write: <i>The slinky shiny snake slithered slowly sneakily and silently.</i></p> <p>Avoid clichés: <i>The silvery moon</i></p>
2. Add in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adjectives & adverbs effectively (adverbs are more powerful) Drop in phrases and clauses: <i>Simon, who had been waiting patiently for the right moment,...</i> 	
3. Add on phrases and clauses	<p>Begin sentences with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ed-ing-ly starters <i>because, if, when, although, since</i> etc <i>In the..., on the ... under...; above... etc</i> Similes: <i>as hot as a panting dog</i> 	
4. Show don't tell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the reader picture the scene and experience the emotions. <p><u>Tell:</u> <i>He felt scared in the churchyard.</i></p> <p><u>Show:</u> <i>The shadows of the gravestones seemed to be following him.</i></p>	
5. Change sentence type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use questions, exclamations and bossy sentences as well as normal sentences. 	
6. Vary sentences	<p><u>Simple:</u> <i>She stared at the wall of fog blankly.</i></p> <p><u>Compound:</u> <i>She opened the curtains and stared at the wall of fog blankly.</i></p> <p><u>Complex:</u> <i>Opening the curtains, she stared blankly at the wall of fog.</i></p> <p><u>Minor:</u> <i>Fog.</i></p>	
7. Reorder sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spin your sentences Decide on the effect you want 	
8. Special effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound effects: the rhythm of the sentences; onomatopoeia, alliteration Imagery: simile, metaphor, personification 	Don't over write:
9. Hook reader in opening paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move hook to front and jump straight in 	
10. Make every word, phrase, sentence earn its place -		<p>Don't repeat except for special effect. Don't tell reader what already know</p> <p>Don't ramble – keep it focused</p>
11. Slow down at significant moments		Don't dash through – select what to focus on