

HOOKS IN WRITING (Mrs. Lori Huntley)

My sample topic: Driver's License

Type of writing: Argument

Claim: To obtain a driver's license, all sixteen- and seventeen-year olds must pass their school classes.

1. Question

Example: If a person shirks his responsibilities to his education, how can he be trusted with the responsibility of your life in his hands?

Non-example: Should a person who fails school be given a license?

Problem: If the reader says "yes" right away, he/she may not bother to read the essay.

Tip: Avoid YES/NO questions.

2. Shocking fact

Example: Eighty-nine percent of teenage drivers involved in serious accidents fail at least two school classes.

Non-example: Many teenage drivers who do not do well in school cause accidents.

Problem: Vague

Tip: Find an unusual fact that most people will not know.

3. Hyperbole - exaggeration

Example: If a student does not pass school classes, he could never learn to drive.

Non-example: Failing students will be irresponsible driving 110% of the time.

Problem: There is no such thing as 110% of the time.

Tip: Use an exaggeration that readers will understand.

4. Simile/Metaphor - comparison

Example: Tying a license to school performance is like a dog chasing a rabbit in a race.

Non-example: Tying a license to school performance is like a bird in a nest.

Problem: The non-example does not make sense.

Tip: When writing a simile or metaphor, use something fresh. Using a familiar one will make the writing stale.

5. Scenario/anecdote – a story that sets the scene for essay

Example: A young lady who does not attend school regularly wants to learn to drive. She fails all of her classes, yet passes driver's education class. Her motivation is a set of keys to a new car. But where is she going? She's headed down a dead end road to her future.

Tip: Write something original.

6. Fragment – a listing of two or three fragments followed by a strong statement.

Example: Motivation. Laziness. Driver's license. A lazy student can be motivated if he wants to drive.

Non-example: Motivation. Laziness. Driver's license.

Problem: This is missing a strong sentence following the fragments.

Tip: Use parallel structure in the fragments.

7. Famous quotation

Example: "It takes 8,460 bolts to assemble an automobile, and one nut to scatter it all over the road." -

Author Unknown

Non-example: "Never lend your car to anyone to whom you have given birth." - Erma Bombeck

Problem: The quote does not fit the topic.

Tip: Be sure the quote fits with the topic.