

Super Devices for Starting an Essay

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9/10 Honors English

Why use one?

- Engaging - it hooks the reader's interest
- Sets context well
- Makes your writing more personal
- More powerful!

I. THE STRIKING STATEMENT (It is an abrupt, surprising, concise, even shocking comment)

She slapped him six or seven times and he just stood there. True, Josh Arnold's mother had been drinking sherry, and he had been sarcastic. Richard Bradford's novel, Red Sky At Morning, reveals the growth towards maturity of 17-year-old Josh Arnold and the deterioration of his mother, Ann.

Holden Caulfield has a dirty mouth. Still, J.D. Salinger's novel, Catcher In The Rye, redeems Holden as a very decent kid. He may swear in every third breath, but he still sets a high standard for moral behavior, he appreciates sincerity, and he is quite altruistic.

II. THE ANECDOTE (A personal story or incident can be extremely effective so long as it bears upon your topic. Anecdotes can come from your own life, or they can come from a novel you are discussing.)

After 1,900 miles we'd reached our new home. California at last! The climate, the people, the food, and the school were all strange, all a bit frightening, but interesting and inviting, too. We must have felt much like Josh Arnold in Richard Bradford's novel, Red Sky at Morning. Josh also finds everything strange but intriguing. In Sagrado, New Mexico, he endures a series of tests that reveal the strength of his character.

I was book monitor in Mrs. Totten's third grade class. I still remember the childish rhyme we used to chant: "Totten, Totten, old Mrs. Totten; boy oh boy, is she rotten!" Holden Caulfield also has bittersweet memories as he recalls his teachers at Pency Prep....

III. DEFINITION (choose a key term which relates to the topic and define it in your own words)

A human parasite is a person who habitually takes advantage of the generosity of others while contributing nothing in return. In the novel Red Sky at Morning by Richard Bradford, Jimbob Buel is the parasite.

'Arrogant' would be the best way to describe Milkman, the protagonist in Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon. Milkman thinks he is superior to everyone in his family, and he treats them like stray dogs—alternately ignoring them or kicking them out of the way.

IV. THE QUOTATION (As with all quotations, you can't just plop one on the page; it should be integrated so that the reader knows who is talking and what's going on.)

"Sleep tight, ya morons!" are Holden Caulfield's last words as he leaves his dorm, booted out of school, and on his way home. In those words are the anger, cynicism, and loneliness that have made him so appealing and so repulsive to readers of J.D. Salinger's novel Catcher in the Rye.

"For me, living was the same as running through hell with a gasoline suit on," reflects Chappie as he thinks back to his life two years before—a homeless teenager, living from day to day and joint to joint. Considering Chappie's messed-up parents, his dangerous friends, and his addictive personality, his life really was like living in hell.