

KS3 English Language Fiction Writing: **Openings**

Read these openings from famous works of literature and then fill in the table, one column at a time.

Opening	Questions you ask yourself	How the opening is effective?
<p>'It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.'</p> <p>1984 by George Orwell</p>		
<p>'The sun does not go down.</p> <p>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.'</p> <p>Midwinterblood by Marcus Sedgwick</p>		
<p>'Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.'</p> <p>A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens</p>		
<p>'I've read many more books than you. It doesn't matter how many you've read. I've read more. Believe me. I've had the time.'</p> <p>Everything Everything by Nicola Yoon</p>		

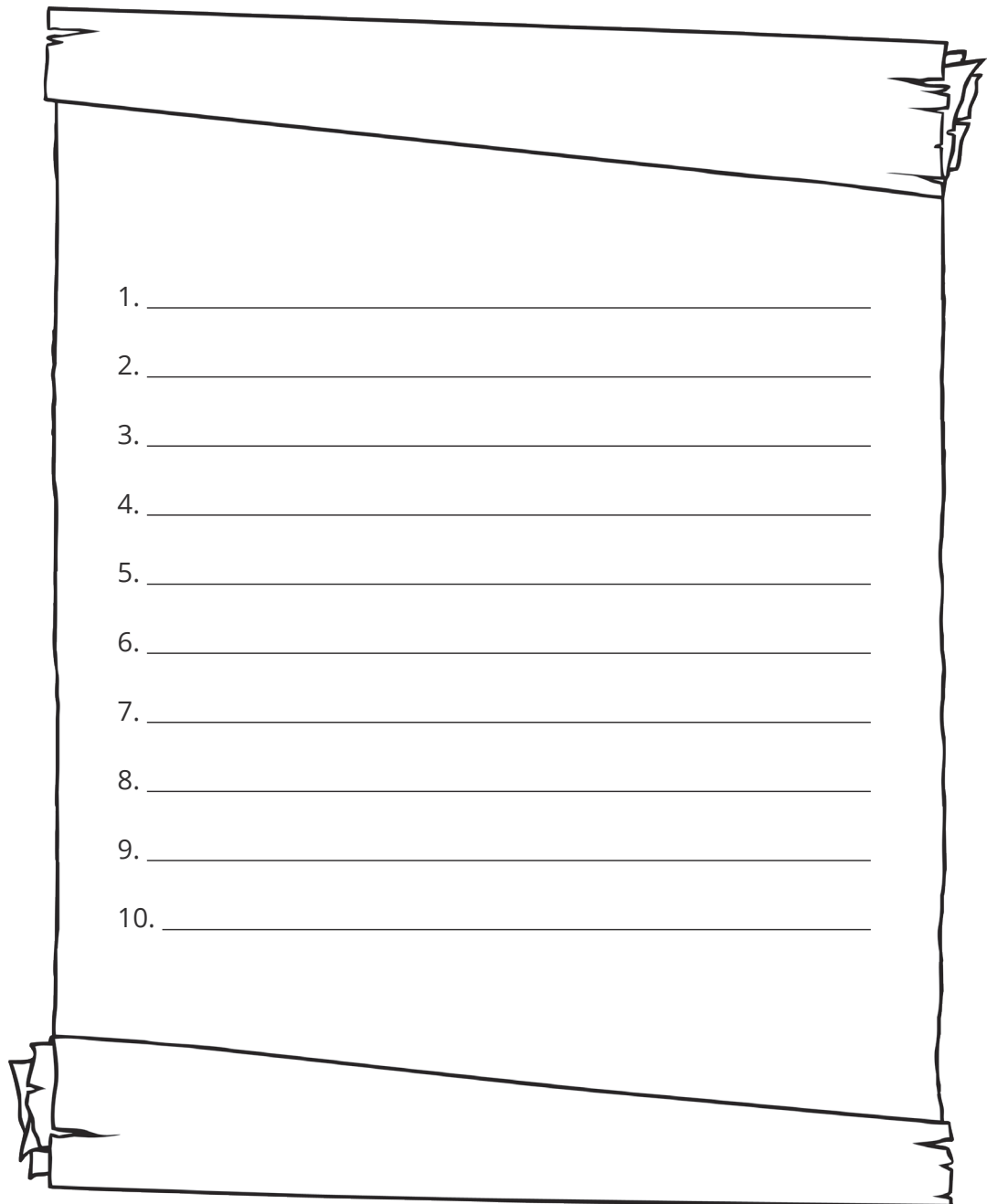
<p>'The boy with the fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way towards the lagoon. Though he had taken off his school sweater and trailed it now from one hand, his grey shirt stuck to him and his hair was plastered to his forehead. All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat.'</p> <p>Lord of the Flies by William Golding</p>		
<p>"Honestly, Mrs Hadley," said Meggie McGregor, wiping her eyes. "That sense of humour of yours will be the death of me yet!"</p> <p>Jasmine Hadley allowed herself a rare giggle. "The things I tell you Meggie. It's lucky we're such good friends!"</p> <p>Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman</p>		
<p>'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.'</p> <p>Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen</p>		

English Language Fiction Writing

Story Openings List

What are the different techniques you could use to open a story? Make a list here.

Remember: make your list as comprehensive as possible, as you'll be using it again!



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____



KS3 English Language Writing – Lesson 1: Openings Teaching Ideas

Learning Objective:

To understand how to write the opening to a story.

Success Criteria:

- To consider how we get hooked into stories.
- To analyse the techniques used by writers to open their stories.
- To create my own story opening.

Context

This is the first lesson in a KS3 unit of work focussing on KS4 English Language writing assessment objectives. In this lesson, students are introduced to openings from stories; they explore what makes a captivating opening, and apply this to their own work.

The focus for this lesson is AO5: Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences; **organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence** and cohesion of texts.

Resources

Raiders of The Lost Ark (Spielberg, 1981) or a suitable film with a captivating opening.

Starter

Setting the Scene

You could start to introduce students to story openings by showing the beginning of a classic film. **Raiders of The Lost Ark** (Spielberg, 1981) is a great choice (although it does have some gruesome moments), but if you don't have access to this then any classic film which hooks the audience from the start will work. Initiate a class discussion: what does the opening achieve? (It introduces main characters and concepts, creates curiosity in the audience, leaves unanswered questions, shocks, etc.)

Main Activities

Openings in Literature

Now, you could introduce the concept that books have to fulfil the same function as films – they must captivate their reader from the start, so that they read on. In pairs, students could now try the **Openings Worksheet**. What questions do these openings make us ask ourselves? Ask students to fill in the **Questions** column of the sheet.

How Do They Do It?

Next, students could think about how the openings are effective. Do they speak directly to the reader? Do they introduce a character or setting? Do they create a fantastical world? Do they intrigue us? Students could then fill in the **How** column of the worksheet.

Write Your Own!

Students could attempt the **Write Your Own** worksheet. This gives students three scenarios and asks them to write story openings for each. The worksheet is available in higher and lower ability versions.

Plenary

Make a List!

Finally, can students create a list of techniques for story openings using the **Story Openings List**. This could include starting with a question, intriguing the reader, starting with a shock, introducing a character, introducing a setting, etc.

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Write Your Own - Expert

Read these three ideas for short stories. Can you think of a captivating opening for each of them?

Story	Your opening
<p>A family move into a new house which they soon discover is haunted by an evil spirit.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>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.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>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.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

English Language Fiction Writing

Write Your Own - Essential

Read these three ideas for short stories. Can you think of a captivating opening for each of them?

Story	Your opening
<p>A family move into a new house which they soon discover is haunted by an evil spirit.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Useful vocabulary: dark, menacing, sinister, uncertain, atmosphere</p>
<p>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.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Useful vocabulary: cruel, lonely, victim, scared, angry</p>
<p>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.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Useful vocabulary: machine, artificial intelligence, menial tasks, sinister, ability</p>