

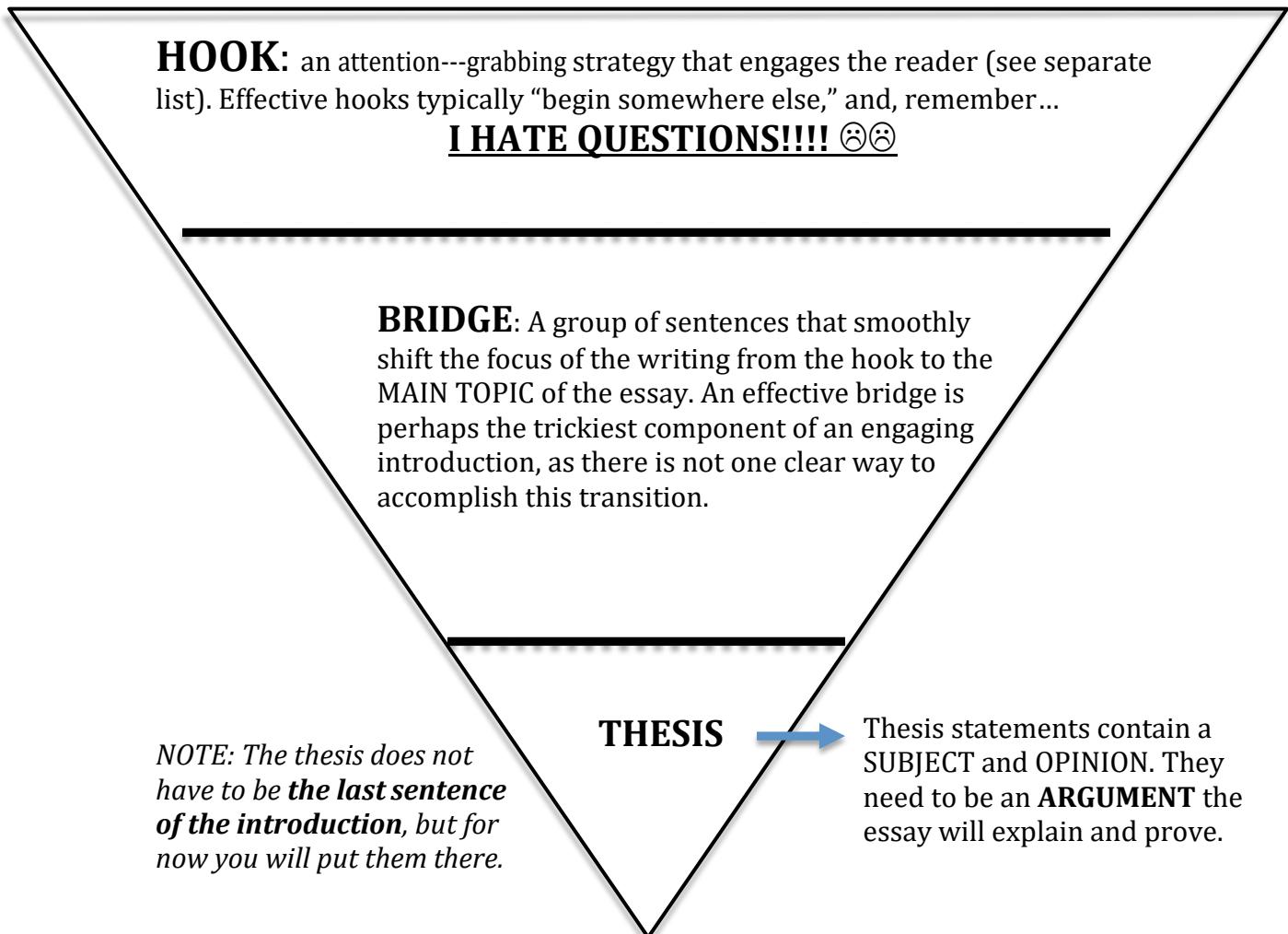
# **Writing Effective Introductions: A Magic Trick (sort of)**

Think back to the first time you met me. Chances are I smiled warmly, I may have shook your hand, and asked your name. I probably asked you something about yourself and let you know what class I teach, just to make sure you were in the right spot. I did not—I am sure—mumble under my breath, avoid eye contact, or growl, “Sit over there. You’re early, so I’m not ready to start class!”

Obviously, I wanted to make a good first impression, so I took steps to communicate to you that you were welcome in my class and I was excited about the chance to get to know you better.

**Well, as a writer, you need to make a conscious effort to be warm and welcoming to your reader.** You want your reader to think, “Now THIS person is clever and warm and interesting. I want to read MORE of what he or she has to write.” To get this reaction, you need to create a **stylish, memorable, and effective introduction.**

*The three parts of any effective introduction*



## Effective HOOK Techniques:

**TAKE A RISK:** *No matter which technique you use, BE ORIGINAL and take a risk. Boring writing is predictable writing. Do something different...and a little weird.*

**Begin with a question:** I know you have been taught to begin with an interesting question. Here's the problem. Your question isn't interesting. I know you think it is, but it isn't. Beginning with a question is a **lazy, unimaginative way** to begin your piece. You are more creative. DO SOMETHING ELSE.

**Quotation or Statistic:** This method is also pretty lazy, unless your quotation or statistic is particularly engaging. I encourage you to use another technique, but if you feel you have a great quote or statistic, you *might* use this technique off.

**Personal story:** Readers respond to a personality, so share a short story about a moment in your life. You can accomplish quite a bit in a few short sentences if you give the reader an intimate, memorable "slice of life."

**Anecdote:** Again, tell a brief story but take it from someone else's life. You do not need to use your story. EXAMPLE:

*Before efficient extraction methods developed in the late 1880s, aluminum was VERY difficult to mine. As a result, pure aluminum was more valuable than gold. Napoleon gave banquets where the most honored guests were given aluminum utensils, while the others made do with gold.*

**Metaphor:** Creating your own metaphor or analogy is a wonderful way to add style to your writing. Beginning with your own comparison shows you understand so well that you can illustrate nuances through your own figurative language. Mastering the metaphor should be a goal of any writer.

**Unexpected Claim:** "There are more slaves in the world today than at any point in human history." This statement seems to be false, but it is actually true. Beginning your essay with an unexpected claim can be very effective.

**Vivid Description:** Paint a word picture for your reader, focusing in on some object, place, or moment that connects to your general topic. If you can create memorable imagery, your readers will be more likely to engage with your essay.

**Humor:** If the situation calls for it, humor can be incredibly effective. Of course, humor is the most difficult tone to create in writing, but if you can pull it off...go for it.

**???Your Choice???**: This is not an exhaustive list. Try some other strategy not listed here. The most important thing is to be ORIGINAL and MEMORABLE.

