

A whimsical illustration of a castle with multiple towers and turrets, all with brown tiled roofs. The castle is surrounded by dark, gnarled tree branches and green foliage. Red berries and white flowers are scattered throughout the scene. The background shows a blue sky with white clouds and a green landscape.


Twisted Fairy Tales – Story Opening

Story openings...


You must have heard of me. The *wicked* stepmother? That's not true. It's just another one of Cinderella's wild stories. Not as wild as the one about the pumpkin, or the one about the fairy godmother. The *real* story, the *true* story, began with some chatter – and some dust.

Today you will be writing the opening for your story.

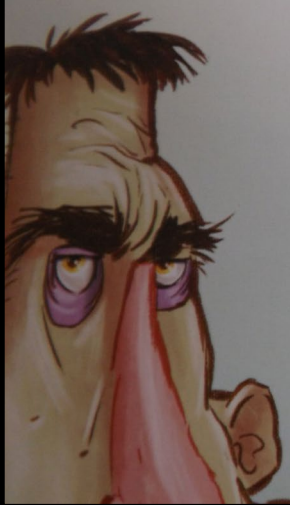
Look at the following examples of the openings to some of the stories we have looked at over the last few weeks and think about how the author has engaged you as a reader and how you could borrow and use some of these techniques to open your own story.



All I ever wanted was a husband and a mansion. Before I married Cindy's father, my two darlings and I had met Cindy only a few times. The girl had *seemed* normal then.



After I married Cindy's father, my darlings and I moved in. When I had just one foot on the front step, my dear husband kissed me goodbye and said, "I'm off on business!"



People think it's easy being a giant. You get to be rotten, grumpy, and loud. You're big and tough. You have stacks of treasure.

Best of all, **NOBODY** tells you how to behave.

Giant life is no picnic, though. It's hard to find shoes that fit. My knees hurt from the weight of my huge body. I'm always hungry. *Always.*



The worst thing of all is *humans*.

Humans are part of a balanced giant breakfast. When you're not eating them, though, they're a real pain. Sometimes they laugh at me behind my back. They call me "stinky" and "fatso". They ring my doorbell and run away. Ha ha ha, very funny!



Chomp! Chomp! Oh, I'm sorry. I was just finishing my lunch. My name's Wolf—Big Bad Wolf. You may have heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood. About a girl and her granny? Seems everyone has. My tail is different. Did I say tail? I meant tale.

Once upon a time, I ran out of food. Completely. The cupboards were bare. The freezer too. And I'd eaten every last vegetable and fruit in the garden. **Every one.**

Other wolves might've lunched on little forest critters: chipmunks, bunnies, squirrels. But I'm a vegetarian. That's right; I *don't* eat meat. Well, I try not to. I **LOVE** apples. Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, Golden Delicious ... Any kind, really. But, sadly, it was a long time until apple harvest.

I hadn't eaten in weeks. My stomach growled and howled. It moaned and groaned. It even roared. Then, my nose took over.

Sniff. Sniff. I took a whiff. What was it?

A girl.

Sniff. Sniff. I took a whiff. What was it?

Cake. Butter. In *this* forest? I had to investigate.



ONCE UPON A time, many *MICONS* ago, of course, there was a king and a queen who had a prince for a son.

He was a nice boy and not unpleasant to look at – in fact, **handsome** – not *too* handsome, just **handsome** enough.



Read this example of an opening for the story of Cinderella, but from the perspective of the glass slipper...

Many years ago, in a faraway land that I'm sure you've never heard of, I was born. I say born but actually I just appeared. One minute I wasn't there, the next moment I was.

Suddenly, I found myself in a bright kitchen, held in a warm, wrinkled hand. An elderly fairy handed me to a sad-eyed girl, along with my twin. We were both delicate and brilliant.

"Here you are Cinderella," she said. Quickly, the girl slipped me on her foot. It was soft and not at all sweaty. "Now, what about a dress?" The fairy waved a sparkly wand and Cinderella's ragged clothes became a beautiful ball gown. With another flick of her wand, a coach and horses appeared outside.

"Thank you," said Cinderella.

Then, Cinderella ran outside, thankfully avoiding the mud. Cinderella waved Cinderella's hand and next Cinderella climbed into the golden carriage. Cinderella smiled at the fairy. Cinderella wiggled her toes in excitement. "Remember my dear, you must be back before midnight," explained the fairy. Cinderella nodded Cinderella's head and Cinderella and I left for the ball. I was very excited, resting on the plush, red carpet on the floor of the carriage.



Your task:

Today you are going to write the opening of your fairy tale. The openings you have looked at from the other stories we have read will hopefully give you some ideas for starting your own opening.

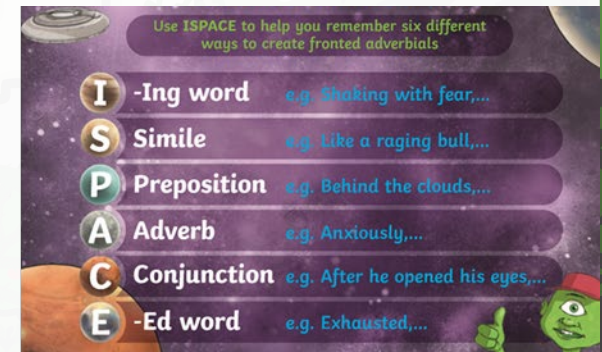
In you opening, make sure that you do the following things:

- Introduce and describe the setting of your story.
- Introduce and describe the main character.
- Start the build up to your problem – for example, the wolf in ‘Red Riding Hood was Rotten’ was hungry, the wicked stepmother in ‘Seriously, Cinderella is SO Annoying’ needed a husband and in ‘Trust Me, Jack’s Beanstalk Stinks’, Jack had snuck into the giant’s house.
- If you were writing about Hansel and Gretel for example, you would introduce the forest, the witch and her house and explain how naughty children keep eating it!

See the next slide for hints about how to make your opening engaging for the reader.

How can we write a good story opening?

- Say each sentence before you write it to hear how to develop it
- Write in 1st person (me, I, my, etc.)
- Use past tense (grew, found, lost, etc.)
- Grab your reader's attention in the first sentences (My life changed forever the day...I knew that it would end in trouble as soon as...I always knew I would be special, etc.)
- Use interesting adjectives to describe the setting and characters (dusty, ancient, terrifying)
- Use powerful verbs, including reporting clauses (bellowed, whispered, pounded, tore)
- Include some punctuated dialogue - only one or two interesting sentences per section
- Use story language/adverbs/adverbials for time, place and manner (many years ago, without warning, before long)
- End your opening with a tension building sentence (Little did I know what would happen next)
- Avoid repeating the same noun by replacing some with pronouns (he, she, it, his, her, its, etc.)



Word mats

Using Higher Level Vocabulary: Fiction Writing To Describe Settings

attractive	grand	bustling
awe-inspiring	impressive	busy
beautiful	majestic	crowded
breathtaking	regal	hectic
glorious	splendid	lively
magnificent	stately	swarming
spectacular	lavish	teeming
disgusting	creepy	calm
hideous	eerie	noiseless
horrible	frightening	peaceful
ugly	scary	quiet
unappealing	sinister	silent
unattractive	spine-chilling	still
unsightly	unnerving	tranquil

You can use the story word mats to help you...



Traditional Story



Once upon a time...

In a land far, far away...

...happily ever after.

after	because	who
before	if	whose
since	while	which
	when	

beautiful
cottage
fairy
magic
princess
unique
brave

enchanted
forest
magical kingdom
spell
wicked
castle
evil

in love
prince
three wishes
wood



bellowed	boomed	laughed
mumbled	muttered	replied
roared	screamed	shrieked
stuttered	whispered	yelled