

Quality Story Beginnings

With your partner, read through each story beginning out-loud. Then talk together about what it does to "hook" readers into continuing the story. Do you like the beginning? Why? Finally, decide together what type of story beginning each represents. Write an "A" next to beginnings that start with action, "C" for conversation (or dialog), and "D" for description.

Rudy Soto dreams of flying... wants to float on the wind, to soar over canyons. He doesn't see himself some little light-winged bird that flaps and flutters when it flies. No cactus wren. No sparrow. He'd be more like a HAWK gliding smoother than anything else in the world. ~ Hawk, I'm Your Brother, by Byrd Baylor

Grandma looked at the horizon, drew a deep breath and said, "This is Thunder Cake baking weather, all right. Looks like a storm is coming to me.'

"Child, you come out from under that bed. It's only thunder you're hearing," my grandma said. ~ Thunder Cake, by Patricia Polacco

In an old barn on a little hill lived four hens, a noisy rooster, a cluster of chicks, Daisy the farm dog, and Mr. Goose. Mr. Goose was great friends with the chicks. Like a loving uncle, he played games with them - tag or hide-and-seek. He often took them down to the pond, or gabbled a story to them. ~ The Little Green Goose, by Adele Sansone

On a cold autumn morning a long time ago the Emperor of Japan was about to eat his morning egg when suddenly...out jumped a little smiling dragon. ~ The Laughing Dragon, by Kenneth Mahood

"I think spring is my favorite season," said the Ibis to the Egret one fine spring day. "With the marsh turning green and the wind on the water, and the land birds singing and ducks heading north, and the new blue crabs swimming on the rising spring tide, don't you think spring is your favorite time?" - The Ibis and The Egret, by Roy Owen

I woke up one morning to the sound of a bluejay squaking outside my bedroom window. Raising the window shade, I wondered how many other jays had lived in my backyard. ~ My Very Own Room, by Amada Irma Pérez

Harry Potter was a highly unusual boy in many ways. For one thing, he hated the summer holidays more than any other time of year. For another, he really wanted to do his homework, but was forced to do it in secret, in the dead of night. And he also happened to be a wizard." ~ Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, by J.K. Rowling

"Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

"Out to the hoghouse," replied Mrs. Arable. "Some pigs were born last night."

"I don't see why he needs an ax," continued Fern, who was only eight. ~ Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White

Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it." ~ Winnie-the-Pooh, by A.A. Milne

It was late one winter night, long past my bedtime, when Pa and I went owling. There was no wind. The trees stood still as giant statues. And the moon was so bright the sky seemed to shine. Somewhere behind us a train whistle blew, long and low, like a sad, sad song. ~ Owl Moon, by Jane Yolen

Prietita was at the house of la curandera - the healer. She was working in the garden when her little sister Mirando came running toward her. Prietita could see that she was frightened. ~ Prietita and the Ghost Woman, by Gloria Anzaldúa