

GOOD BEGINNINGS

1. A thought.

I'm in big trouble now, I thought to myself.

2. Dialogue.

"We're moving." That's what she told me. I couldn't believe it! I had just made the basketball team and was making more friends.

"What!" I exclaimed.

3. Painting the Scene

"The hottest day of the summer so far was drawing to a close and a drowsy silence lay over the large, square houses of Privet Drive."

- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

4. Address the audience.

You walk into the dentist's office. You sit down. You try to read a magazine. But it's no use. You're scared and there's nothing you can do about it.

5. A list.

The sweat on your brow. A layer of dust on your face. Out in the woods. Somewhere. And on a horse. Of all the places in the world, I feel best on a horse.

6. "Show"feelings.

I sat in my desk, sweat dripping down my face. I shut my eyes tight, then opened them. I looked at my watch, 11:27. Three minutes!

7. A Quote

"One should not attend even the end of the world without a good breakfast."
— Robert A. Heinlein, *Friday*. (Brainy Quotes).

Bad Beginnings

1. The “telephone call” beginning.

Hi! My name is Steve. Blah, blah, blah...

Unless I’m calling someone on the phone to get them to buy something from me, (or writing a piece about telemarketing) there is no legitimate reason why this beginning should ever be used.

2. The completely unnecessary beginning.

In this paper, I will be telling you about blah, blah, blah...

I should always trust that my readers are smart enough to figure out on their own what my piece is about. Telling them ahead of time doesn’t win me any points. And, if my piece turns out to be about something different, then I’ve really gotten myself into a pickle, haven’t I?

3. The “non-beginning” beginning.

One day, blah, blah, blah...

While this may be the well-intentioned opening of many an earnest yarn, it is not properly a beginning at all. It doesn’t do anything; it just sits there on the paper, staring at us, thinking: “Couldn’t come up with a real beginning, could you?” We could all spare ourselves this indignity by simply trying any other beginning at all (as long as it’s not on this page). So let’s just do it, shall we? Similarly weak variations on the “non-beginning” beginning include “Once...” and “One time...”. Though not quite as bad, but still rather unexciting, the following beginnings may be used on an extremely limited basis and only in desperate situations (such as official promoted writing assignments).