

# How to Write a Hook Statement for Your Book

A book with a hook is something that sinks its claws into you from the start—from the first "conversation" with the book cover, its visual communication, its title and subtitle. The prospective reader feels—not just thinks, but intuits on a deep, trustable level—that this book is speaking to a need or desire they have. There is an immediate sense of recognition.

Turn the book over and read the back jacket copy. Open the pages and scan the chapter headings. Start reading the first lines.

Readers start accumulating clues and hints that either pique their interest or confirm their first impressions.

All of these aggregate into a big hook. So, how do you identify this in one simple, encapsulated set of words? How do you write a hook statement?

## A HOOK STATEMENT

A hook statement is a two-sentence nugget that contains the title, subtitle and captivating appeal of your book.

In fiction, you want to focus on character, plot and stakes -- what does your character want, what happens and what must your character do to get it?

In a nonfiction book, your hook statement must suggest a clear benefit to the reader. It makes a promise to solve a problem the reader is having.

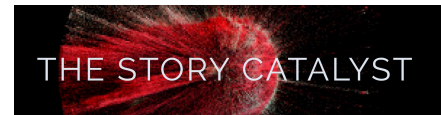
**A hook statement must be irresistible *and* remarkable.**

A hook statement must be intriguing and familiar at once. It has a startle factor: The prospective reader thinks, "That's a brilliant and novel idea!" But the reader also thinks, "I was just thinking that someone ought to write a book about that!"

In fiction, it needs to seem like it's breaking new ground through a story that has a setting and a character you'll want to follow.

In a nonfiction book, it needs to seem like it's breaking some news to you.

Elements of a hook:



- It's simply appealing.
- It recognizes where the reader is, or aspires to be.
- It suggests a purpose or promises something better.
- It names a problem the reader has been trying to name.

## THE SECOND ELEMENT OF A HOOK FOR A NONFICTION BOOK

For a nonfiction book, it's just as important *who* you are as to *what* you're saying. What is the narrative behind how you became the person to write this book? Was there something you were experiencing, feeling or observing that led you to inquire more into the problem? What was unsatisfying about the answers other people were providing? What was missing? How did you begin searching for better answers, and what did you find out?

In short, you became an expert—and probably a pretty motivated and informed one—because you lived your way into the answers.

Finally, what elements of your personal history are simply fascinating?

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Your most important work on a hook is on writing the title and subtitle.

For a great start on this, view this video from Kelly Notaras of KN Literary:

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1110795205626263&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1110795205626263&ref=watch_permalink)

Then do a little Bookshop or Amazon research (or go really crazy and go to a brick-and-mortar bookstore and look at how your book category, or genre, is displayed.

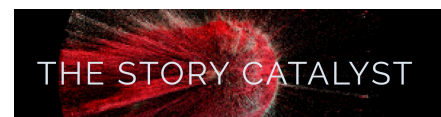
List titles you like.

List buzzy words.

List all-too-common words (like "journey"). (These are words that you'll weed out.)

## NOW, LET'S DO IT: FICTION

Character, quest, stakes. That's the mix you need.



One of the best ways you can stoke your inspiration for this: Read the encapsulated statements announcing book deals on Publishers Marketplace. These are finely crafted statements that are embedded with hooks galore. (I often want to read nearly every book I see after reading these!)

- Who is your main character? What event precipitated the story, or quest?
- What does your character want?
- What's in the way?
- What are the stakes of the 'final battle,' as it were? (In your case, think about the turning point of your quest for healing grief and arriving at spiritual peace -- what was pivotal about that turning point, and what was at stake for you?)

## NOW, LET'S DO IT: NONFICTION

### **STEP #1 WHAT'S APPEALING AND CAPTIVATING?**

Make a list.

### **STEP #2 WHAT UNLOCKS THE DOOR?**

Dial in and be specific. Don't say "spiritual self-knowledge." Get at a specific key ingredient (wholeness) and a specific method.

If you discover this, then that.

### **STEP #2 YOU ARE THE UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION**

YOUR CREDENTIALS

YOUR OBSERVED EXPERIENCE

YOUR INSIGHTS AND HARD-EARNED LESSONS

### **STEP #3 A CLEAR BENEFIT**

List 5 clear benefits your book will offer.

### **STEP #4 SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW**

What startling insight can you offer that turns conventional thinking around?

What paradigm shift can you create?

### **STEP #5 REMARKABILITY**

What makes people remark about your idea to other people? When they tell someone else, they feel smart and helpful.



### **STEP #6 IMAGINE A VISUAL**

Is there a symbol or an image or a vibe that you can see expressed in a visual that can be your book cover? What image reinforces the title, makes it more than the words themselves?

When you write the words, what visual enhances or elevates the appeal?

### **STEP #7 WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL IS IT?**

Is it a guidebook, a code or a #-step plan?

### **STEP #8 GIVE IT A SLANT**

Is it a "the" -- something definitive?

Is it personal -- one woman's journey? (Realize this is overused to the point of saying nearly nothing)

Is it the "everything guide"? The last book about sex you'll ever need?

### **DO**

Limit abstract words.

Use words that suggest people or doing -- not just "wisdom" but "wisdom keepers."

Keep the title, subtitle and hook statement concise.

**FINALLY...** Highlight all the keywords from your list. Take the best, leave the rest. (This includes the word "journey.") Now combine the title/subtitle and the best hook into two to three sentences.

Write three variations.

### **FINALLY, FINALLY**

What zings about each variation?

Every word must work. What words are empty, vague, abstract, repetitive?

Now write three more variations.

### **RESOURCES**

<https://jerichowriters.com/10-story-hook-tips-for-grabbing-attention/>

