**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:** Begin with an interesting question. Take the *main idea* of your essay and ask the reader a question that can get them to start thinking about the topic for themselves before reading.

**Quotation or Statistic:** Find an interesting quotation or a shocking statistic that deals with the *main idea* of the essay and can grab the interest of the reader.

**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.”

**Memorable anecdote:** Again, tell a brief story but take it from someone else’s life. You do not need to use your story. Here’s an example: *Before efficient extraction methods developed in the late 1880s, aluminum was exceedingly 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.