**Introduction “Equation”**

**First Sentence** = Witty, funny attention grabbing sentence that relates to the idea of the claim/thesis

**Second Sentence** = Explain what the funny attention grabbing sentence is about

**Third Sentence** = Link the attention getter to the topic of the paper

**Fourth Sentence** = Continue to develop the idea of the topic

**Fifth Sentence** = Claim/Thesis (this is the sentence that answers the question of the writing prompt, and states what you will prove in your paper)

**\*Disclaimer:** This is just an example and does not in any way mean you must follow this exactly. Add more sentences when necessary, be more creative, and by all means understand there is a reason why the word equation is in quotes on the title of this handout. Notice that my example below has 6 sentences instead of 5.

**Example of the “equation”:**

Senioritis is no longer a phrase made up by teachers and students in their fourth year of high school, but a real epidemic that is sweeping the country. This very real disease is brought on by the plague of four years of monotonous high school classes and the excitement of what graduation will bring. Senioritis can drive teachers to the point of insanity, can make the dean’s want to quit their jobs, and force parents into their underground bunkers until graduation day finally arrives. Now picture these same students with this torturing disease being told that they must stay in school for an additional fifth year. The actual school could quite possibly collapse under the weight of the collective moan heard by these students. A fifth year of high school would be a bad choice made by the administration, not only because of senioritis, but also because of the logistical nightmare it would create for the entire community.

**Attention Getters: What not to do vs. what to do**

What **NOT** to do:

1. **Apology**: “I am a high school student and do not consider myself an expert on the topic.”
2. **Complaint**: “I’d rather write about a topic of my own choice than the one that is assigned, but here it goes.”
3. **Dictionary Definition**: “Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines the…”
4. **Platitude**: any remark or statement, especially one with a moral content, that has been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful.
5. **Reference to Title**: “As you can see from my title, this essay is about…”
6. **Question:** I set this apart because this is not always in the “not” section. You may in fact come up with a provocative question that you want to push your audience to think about.

Example: The American Civil War is a horrific scar that has marred the American past since it’s conclusion in 1865. This begs the question: was it really necessary--would the economy that depended so much on slavery eventually have burnt itself out?

But sadly, most questions students come up with are boring and cliche and we have heard them all before.

**Ok, so if you shouldn’t use the above mentioned attention getters then what should you do?**

**How to bait your hook and lure them in:**

**Humor (Exaggerate)**: Our neighbors have all moved away —again, and it's all Mom's fault—again. Their subtle hints and then outright criticism went right over her head. First it was Christmas wreaths in July, and then it was plastic eggs in December. Leaving holiday decorations up during the wrong season can cause many problems.

**Horrify**: Imagine a line of dead and mangled bodies stretching for twenty-five miles—25,000 corpses. That is the number of victims of drunk driving every year. It's hard to believe that the number is increasing in spite of the ads and community awareness efforts. The time has come to take more specific measures to get drunk drivers off the road.

**Authority**: "Drinking kills more young drivers than any other cause," says John Smith, head of Wisconsin highway safety. "Their corpses litter the highways of America every night." Sadly, many think that there is nothing they can do about this except have their own designated driver or take friends' and family members' keys away. However, studies have shown that cell phones save more people from drunken driving than most people would imagine.

**Famous person:** Beloved American author Mark Twain once said, "Man is the only animal that blushes... or needs to." Joe Biden is living proof of this observation. He has perfected the art of "putting his foot in his mouth" on any occasion.

**Start with a verbal picture. Do not begin "Picture this.." or "Imagine this..":**

The young driver turns up the stereo louder and smiles as he dreams of the fun he had at the party—plenty of good music and beer. Suddenly a tree appears from out of nowhere. He grabs at the wheel to turn the car. Headlights swerve in the darkness. But it's too late. A patrol car screams to find the twisted body of another kid who drank and drove. Teenagers need to understand the effects of alcohol on their adolescent bodies.

**Start with a contrast:**

A third-grade class gallops through a daisy-filled meadow with butterfly nets. A ninth-grade Latin class floods the zoo for a lesson in scientific names. High school seniors ride the Demon at Great America for physics class. A field trip may look like time set aside for fun and games, and most students prefer them to regular classes, but serious examination will show that they educate in a way textbooks and lectures never can.