



## WRITING TIP - THE ALL-IMPORTANT FIRST SENTENCE

THE FIRST SENTENCE in any article or piece of writing is critical to whether the reader decides to carry on or stop reading. When you write, it's important to ask yourself the question: "Would I want to continue reading what I've just written?"

New York Times Bestseller Lysa TerKeurst refers to it as *the crucial first sentence*. She gives some pointers to follow:

- Don't make the first sentence too artistic or mysterious - your reader will be confused.
- Keep the first sentence on topic. Drive the reader to what you are about to address.
- Don't introduce too many topics. Instead, narrow it down.

Here are some examples of how to start the first sentence:

**With an admission of your own failure.** *Example: I was not sorry when my brother died.*

**Challenge an assumption.** *Example: Not everyone seems to agree that we have an immigration problem in the United States.* - Matthew Soerens & Jenny Lang, *Welcoming the Stranger*.

**Ask a question.** *Example: Why is it that cats always land on their feet?*

**Give a surprising statistic or statement.** *Example: You have really nice birthing hips. That was my introduction to ministry leadership as a female.* - Kadi Cole, *Developing Female Leaders*.

**Make a counterintuitive statement.** *Example: It's not about you.* - Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*.

**Give an invitation to imagine.** *Example: Drive through ordering and my youngest daughter are a bad combination.* - Lysa TerKeurst, *The Best Yes*.

FOR ONLINE ARTICLES, it is important the first paragraph tells the main message of your post. That way, you tell Google what your post is about and your article is optimized for search engines. We will help you with optimization, but just keep in mind your first paragraph should not be off topic.