

*Learn the Theory (cont'd)***Start at a moment of change**

Similar to starting with action, this technique drops the reader into the exact moment that the 'real' story begins. A moment of change can be many things – a birth, a death, a new beginning. In the following example, the character's family have just moved house.

*The car stopped in a cloud of dust and we looked at our new home. The farm – oh yeah, big difference to our normal life. The tears on my sister's face were still there, just salt stains after 200 kms of driving. Then suddenly she was scrambling out of the car.*

*'Come on!' she cried, heading to the gate and holding out her hand to pat one of the horses who had come to the fence. They probably just wanted carrots or whatever horses ate, but it was kind of a nice welcome.*

**Start with a sound**

Use a sound to signal action and grab the reader's attention from the very first word. This is a great technique for younger students and a perfect opportunity to introduce the concept of onomatopoeia. For example:

*'Beep' 'Squeak' 'Come on!' This is the fifth time in a traffic jam and we're still two hours away from camp. When we finally arrive, my Dad is relieved that we get there just in time to set up in perfect light. I really love helping Dad set up the tents on the inside. Oh no! I've forgotten my sleeping bag!*

Layla, Year 2, Sunrise Christian School

**Start with humour**

If a book makes you laugh out loud from the first line, you know you're in for a fun ride! For example:

*My family spend every holiday in a caravan by the sea. All of us get stuffed into a bedroom the size of a car boot. We sleep with the window open. If you have brothers, then you know why.*

*The Legend of Captain Crow's Teeth* by Eoin Colfer, Penguin Australia, 2007

**Tip**

Introduce these first three techniques and get students to practise using them before you introduce the other Sizzling Starts techniques.