



BEFORE READING

Think about the topic

- 1 What was your first job? How did you get it? What happened on the first day? Discuss these questions with a partner.
- 2 With your group, make a list of first jobs held by group members. Ask each person to say one word or phrase that expresses his or her feelings about that job.



The First Job

Sandra Cisneros

“The First Job” comes from the novel The House on Mango Street. This novel is the story of a young girl, named Esperanza, growing up in a large city in the United States.

It wasn't as if I didn't want to work. I did. I had even gone to the social security office the month before to get my social security number. I needed money. The Catholic high school cost a lot, and Papa said nobody went to public school unless you wanted to turn out bad.

I thought I'd find an easy job, the kind other kids had, working in the dime store or maybe a hotdog stand. And though I hadn't started looking yet, I thought I might the week after next. But when I came home that afternoon, all wet because Tito had pushed me into the open water hydrant – only I had sort of let him – Mama called me in the kitchen before I could even go and change, and Aunt Lala was sitting there drinking her coffee with a spoon. Aunt Lala said she had found a job for me at the Peter Pan Photo Finishers on North Broadway where she worked and how old was I and to show up tomorrow saying I was one year older and that was that.

So the next morning I put on the navy blue dress that made me look older and borrowed money for lunch and bus fare because Aunt Lala said I wouldn't get paid 'til the next Friday and I went in and saw the boss of the Peter Pan Photo Finishers on North Broadway where Aunt Lala worked and lied about my age like she told me to and sure enough I started that same day.

In my job I had to wear white gloves. I was supposed to match negatives with their prints, just look at the picture and look for the same one on the negative strip, put it in the envelope, and do the next one. That's all. I didn't know where these envelopes were coming from or where they were going. I just did what I was told.

It was real easy and I guess I wouldn't have minded it except that you got tired after a while and I didn't know if I could sit down or not, and then I started sitting down only when the two ladies next to me did. After a while they started to laugh and came up to me and said I could sit when I wanted to and I said I knew.

When lunch time came I was scared to eat alone in the company lunchroom with all those men and ladies looking, so I ate real fast standing in one of the washroom stalls and had lots of time left over so I went back to work early. But then break time came and not knowing where else to go I went into the coatroom because there was a bench there.

I guess it was the time for the night shift or middle shift to arrive because a few people came in and punched the time clock and an older Oriental man said hello and we talked for a while about my just starting and he said we could be friends and next time to go in the lunchroom and sit with him and I felt better. He had nice eyes and I didn't feel so nervous anymore. Then he asked if I knew what day it was and when I said I didn't he said it was his birthday and would I please give him a birthday kiss. I thought I would because he was so old and just as I was about to put my lips on his cheek, he grabs my face with both hands and kisses me hard on the mouth and doesn't let go.

AFTER READING

A Respond to the reading

- 1 Freewrite a response to what you read.
- 2 Share your freewriting with your group.

B Make a visual representation

- 1 With your group, using a large sheet of paper, draw a series of four pictures that recreate Esperanza's story. (See **Make a visual representation** in Unit One on page 41.)
- 2 If the author had added one more paragraph, what do you think she would have said? Discuss this with your group. Then add a fifth picture to your visual representation.
- 3 Explain your group's drawings to the class.

HOW IT'S WRITTEN

Examine the ending

- 1 Reread the last paragraph and discuss the following questions with your group:
 - ① How do you feel about the ending? When you first read it, what was your response?
 - ② Why do you think Cisneros stopped the story in this way?
 - ③ Notice the change of tense in the last sentence. Why do you think the author switched tenses?
- 2 Summarize your group's discussion for the class.

TOPICS FOR WRITING

Choose one topic to write about

- ① Write an essay about your first job or about a job you have had. Tell how you got the job and what you did on the job. Give enough details so readers understand how you felt about it. You may want to include one specific incident on one particular day that will show readers what the job was like for you.
- ② Have you ever had the experience of being taken advantage of because of your age, your gender, or your newness to a place? Write an essay about the experience. Give enough details so readers understand how you felt about it.
- ③ In this story, Esperanza was a teenager in high school when she got her first job. At what age do young people typically go to work in your culture? What jobs do young people have? Write an essay in which you describe a typical job of young people in your culture and give your thoughts and feelings about it. Include the personal story of someone you know, or yourself, as an example.

AFTER WRITING

Share your writing

- 1 Look back at the three toolboxes on giving feedback: *Reader's Response Feedback* on page 15, *Sentence Starter Feedback* on page 49 and *Asking for Feedback* on page 82. Choose the feedback method you would like your partner to use.
- 2 Find a partner and ask him or her to give you feedback, using the method you chose.
- 3 Afterwards, discuss with your partner why you chose this feedback tool.

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BEFORE READING

Test your knowledge

- 1 In “Behind the Counter,” you will read about the teenage workforce in the United States. Before you read, decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F). The correct answers are given in the text.
- _____ ① Most workers in fast food restaurants are teenagers.
 - _____ ② Places such as fast food restaurants like to hire young workers mostly because of their high energy.
 - _____ ③ Teenagers gain experience, job skills, and self-esteem from working.
 - _____ ④ Young people who work too many hours a week tend to skip classes and drop out of school.
 - _____ ⑤ Most teens who work save their money for college.
 - _____ ⑥ Teenagers often work late at night or work longer hours than they are supposed to according to federal and state employment laws.
 - _____ ⑦ Most teenagers who work in fast food restaurants prefer working at the counter with customers rather than working in the kitchen.
- 2 Compare your answers with those of a partner.



Behind the Counter

Eric Schlosser

While doing research for a book called Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser interviewed many teenagers who work in fast food restaurants. This is an excerpt from one chapter of the book.

Every Saturday Elisa Zamot gets up at 5:15 in the morning. . . . By 5:30, Elisa’s showered, done her hair, and put on her McDonald’s uniform. She’s sixteen, bright-eyed and olive-skinned, pretty and petite, ready for another day of work. Elisa’s mother usually drives her the half-mile or so to the restaurant, but sometimes Elisa walks, leaving home before the sun rises. Her family’s modest townhouse sits beside a busy highway . . . in a largely poor and working-class neighborhood.

When Elisa arrives at McDonald’s, the manager unlocks the door and lets her in. . . . For the next hour or so the two of them get everything ready. They turn on the ovens and grills. They go downstairs into the basement and get food and supplies for the morning shift. They get the paper cups, wrappers, cardboard containers, and packets of condiments. They step into the big freezer and get the frozen bacon, the frozen pancakes, and the frozen cinnamon rolls. . . .

The restaurant opens for business at seven o'clock, and for the next hour or so, Elisa and the manager hold down the fort, handling all the orders. . . . Elisa works behind the counter. She takes orders and hands food to customers from breakfast through lunch. When she finally walks home, after seven hours of standing at a cash register, her feet hurt. She's wiped out. . . . And the next morning she gets up at 5:15 again and starts the same routine.

No other industry in the United States has a workforce so dominated by adolescents. About two-thirds of the nation's fast food workers are under the age of twenty. Teenagers open the fast food outlets in the morning, close them at night, and keep them going at all hours in between. Even the managers and assistant managers are sometimes in their late teens. . . . Instead of relying upon a . . . well-paid, and well-trained workforce, the fast food industry seeks out part-time, unskilled workers who are willing to accept low pay. Teenagers . . . are less expensive to hire than adults, [and] . . . easier to control.

PROTECTING YOUTH

Protecting Youth at Work, a report on child labor published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1998 . . . concluded that the long hours many American teenagers now spend on the job pose a great risk to their future educational and financial success. Numerous studies have found that kids who work up to twenty hours a week during the school year generally benefit from the experience, gaining an increased sense of personal responsibility and self-esteem. But kids who work more than that are far more likely to cut classes and drop out of high school. Teenage boys who work longer hours are much more likely to develop substance abuse problems and commit petty crimes. . . .

Elisa Zamot is a junior in high school. In addition to working at McDonald's on the weekends, she also works there two days a week after school. All together, she spends about thirty to thirty-five hours a week at the restaurant. She earns the minimum wage. Her parents, Carlos and Cynthia, are loving but strict. They're Puerto Rican and moved to Colorado Springs from New Jersey. They make sure Elisa does all her homework and impose a midnight curfew. Elisa's usually too tired to stay out late, anyway. Her school bus arrives at six in the morning. . . .

Elisa had wanted to work at McDonald's ever since she was a toddler – a feeling shared by many of the McDonald's workers I met in Colorado Springs. But now she hates the job and is desperate to quit. Working at the counter, she constantly has to deal with rude remarks and complaints. Many of the customers look down on fast food workers and feel entitled to treat them with disrespect. Sweet-faced Elisa is often yelled at by strangers angry that their food's taking too long. . . . One elderly woman threw a hamburger at her because there was mustard on it. Elisa hopes to find her next job at a Wal-Mart, at a clothing store, anywhere but a fast food restaurant.

After graduating, Elisa hopes to go to Princeton. She's saving most of her earnings to buy a car. The rest is spent on clothes, shoes, and school lunches. A lot of kids at her school don't save any of the money earned at their fast food jobs. They buy beepers, cellular phones, stereos, and designer clothes.

During my interview with local high school kids, I heard numerous stories of fifteen-year-olds working twelve-hour shifts at fast food restaurants and sophomores working long past midnight. The Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits the employment of kids under the age of sixteen for more than three hours on a school day, or later than seven o'clock at night. Colorado state law prohibits the employment of kids under the age of eighteen for more than eight hours a day. . . .

Most of the high school students I met liked working at fast food restaurants. They complained that the work was boring . . . but enjoyed earning money, getting away from school and parents, hanging out with friends at work, and goofing off as much as possible. Few of the kids liked working the counter or dealing with customers. They much preferred working in the kitchen, where they could talk to friends and fool around. . . .

None of the fast food workers I met in Colorado Springs spoke of organizing a union. The thought has probably never occurred to them. When these kids don't like the working conditions or the manager, they quit. Then they find a job at another restaurant, and the cycle goes on and on.

AFTER READING

A Check your answers

- 1 With your partner, go back to your true/false answers in **Test your knowledge** on page 116. Check your answers against what the author said in the text. How accurate were your guesses?
- 2 Discuss and compare your answers with your group.

B Annotate the reading

- 1 Read about a useful technique to use when reading difficult material, for example, from a textbook.



Annotating

Annotating is a way of reading with a pencil in hand. As you read, you mark up the text in any way that makes sense to you. If you don't want to mark directly on the text, you can make a photocopy and write on it.

- Underline, circle, highlight, or bracket important or interesting words, phrases, and sentences.
- Draw arrows to connect related ideas.
- Write comments and questions in the margins.
- Number points.
- Make any other markings that are meaningful to you.

Most people who annotate read a text several times and make more annotations each time they read it. Rereading helps readers see things in a new way and with fresh understanding.

- 2 Reread the text and annotate it.
- 3 Explain your annotations to a partner.

C Find advantages and disadvantages

- 1 In this text, Schlosser presents both positive and negative aspects of teenagers working in fast food restaurants. With a partner, make a list of the advantages and the disadvantages he presents. Which list is longer?

Advantages	Disadvantages

- 2 Share your lists with your group. If you can think of any other advantages or disadvantages of teenagers working in fast food restaurants from your own experience, add them to your lists.

HOW IT'S WRITTEN

Identify general and specific information

- 1 This reading gives two kinds of information: specific information about Elisa's work experience and general information about teenagers working in fast food restaurants. With a partner, number the paragraphs and then label each paragraph with **S** if it contains mainly specific information and **G** if it contains mainly general information.
- 2 Compare your findings with your group.
- 3 Reread only the parts of the text that present general information, skipping the parts about Elisa. What effect does that have on you as a reader? What does Elisa's story add? Discuss this with the class.

TOPICS FOR WRITING

Choose one topic to write about

Whichever topic you choose, make sure you support your opinion with facts and examples from this reading, from your own experience, or from your observations of other people. Include both personal stories and general information.

- 1 Write a letter to parents of a teenager giving them advice about whether or not they should let their child work in a fast food restaurant.
- 2 What is your opinion of teenagers as “perfect candidates” for fast food jobs? Write an essay explaining your point of view.
- 3 According to this article, U.S. law says that children under the age of 16 should not work more than three hours a day on a school day, nor should they work after 7:00 P.M. What is your opinion of this law? Write an essay explaining your point of view.

AFTER WRITING

Share your writing

- 1 Attach a blank sheet of paper to your writing. Join a group of classmates who wrote on the same topic you did. Exchange papers and read at least three other essays. On each blank paper, write at least one comment, reaction or question.
- 2 Read your classmates’ feedback about your writing.
- 3 As a group, choose one essay to be read to the class.

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BEFORE READING

Think about the topic

- 1 Read the title. What kinds of jobs do you think are significant, important, and meaningful? Make a list and freewrite about your list.
- 2 Discuss what you wrote with a partner.



To be of use

Marge Piercy

This poem is from a collection called The Art of Blessing the Day: Poems with a Jewish Theme. Marge Piercy is the author of over twenty-five novels and books of poetry.

The people I love best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shadows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.

AFTER READING

A Read and respond

- 1 With a partner, read the poem aloud to each other several times.
- 2 Freewrite for a few minutes about what you noticed the second and third times you heard the poem.

B Make a personal connection

- 1 Look back at what you wrote in **Think about the topic** on page 120.
Freewrite about how Piercy describes meaningful work and people who do it.
Is her description similar to or different from yours?
- 2 Share your freewriting with a partner.

C Act out the poem

- 1 Sometimes powerful images in poetry can be acted out. In your group, have one person read the poem aloud while the others act out what is happening. Use the words of the poem to guide your actions, and use your imagination!
- 2 Act out your version of the poem for the whole class.

HOW IT'S WRITTEN

A Find metaphors and similes

- 1 Piercy uses many metaphors and similes to describe the work of the world, the people who do it, and things worth doing well. With a partner, reread the poem and list all of the metaphors and similes. (See the toolbox *Metaphors and Similes* on page 86.)
- 2 Put the metaphors and similes into categories. For example, how many of them have to do with animals?
- 3 Summarize your findings for the whole class.

B Listen to the sounds

- 1 Poets pay a lot of attention to the sounds of the words in their poems. Poetry is meant to be read aloud. In your group, have one person read the poem aloud while the rest of the group listens with their eyes closed, letting the sounds of the poem fill their minds.
- 2 One way poets create poetry is through alliteration. Read about this technique.



Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together. One example of alliteration is the common phrase “calm, cool, and collected.”

- 3 With a partner, go back through the poem and mark places where there is alliteration. What effect does the alliteration have on you?
- 4 Report your findings to the class.

TOPICS FOR WRITING

Choose one topic to write about

Whichever topic you choose, include words that appeal to the reader's senses (see the toolbox *Using Your Senses* on page 10) and metaphors and similes (see the toolbox *Metaphors and Similes* on page 86). Experiment with alliteration.

- ① Write a poem about the work of the world, the people who do it, and things that are worth doing well. Use your freewritings in **Think about the topic** on page 120 and **Read and respond** on page 121 as a way to get started. Divide the poem into three or four stanzas.
- ② At the end of her poem, Piercy says “The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real.” Write an essay about how you interpret her statement, answering one or more of these questions:
 - What does this statement and the whole poem say about the work of the world?
 - How does this statement relate to you and your own life?
 - Why do you think Piercy said it?
 - How would you change your life if you took this poem seriously?
 - Why do you think it's important for people to read this poem?
- ③ Write a short essay that begins with one of these sentence starters:
 - *I want to work with people who . . .*
 - *I like to share responsibilities with people who . . .*

AFTER WRITING

Share your writing

- 1 Read what you wrote to a partner. Ask your partner to restate what he or she understood and what he or she liked best about the writing.
- 2 Make notes in your log.

Writer's Tip



Read poetry every day of your life. Poetry is good because it flexes muscles you don't use often enough. Poetry expands the senses and keeps them in prime condition. It keeps you aware of your nose, your eye, your ear, your tongue, your hand.

Ray Bradbury

BEFORE READING

Think about the topic

- 1 Read the title and introductory information. With your group, make a cluster of words and phrases you associate with the word *paramedics*.
- 2 Read your group's associations to the class.



The Model Medic

Sarah Freeman

This profile of a New York City paramedic (or emergency medical technician) appeared in the newspaper The Irish Echo in December, 2002. It is based on interviews.

Rhona Chambers has been spat on, vomited on and urinated on yet claims that such experiences are better than the treatment she received at the hands of the fashion industry. As a paramedic in New York City, this former model puts up with a lot in the line of duty. She has relinquished all contact with the modeling world and the life of glamour and privilege that goes with it. She doesn't regret it for one minute. "I love going to work as a paramedic. I never liked going to work as a model," she said last week.

Chambers grew up in a sheltered Mormon Community in Utah. . . . By the time she was 16, Chambers knew that she wanted to go to New York. She and a friend had long talked about moving there. She wanted to be a model, he wanted to be a makeup artist. Finally, they took the step and left Utah.

"We were so young, we didn't really think about what we were doing," Chambers said. They shared an apartment in the East Village and Chambers got her first job in the fashion industry. . . . Now 36, Chambers recalls her early missteps with laughter.

The first step in a modeling career is to build up a portfolio of work in Europe. Models are sent to Paris and Milan where there is a constant demand for fresh faces. As Chambers describes the experience: "You are sent to France at 17 and you don't speak French. The agency doesn't provide chaperones, because they don't give a damn. Their concern is that you work hard and earn money for them. As a young girl you are very vulnerable."

Chamber's experience in Italy was not much better. "My first job was for Italian *Vogue*," she recalled. "That sounds glamorous but the reality is different. We were all housed in a hotel together. The agencies would give our telephone number to all the playboys that hung around the fashion scene." . . .

Chambers knew the work would not last forever. "Magazine work dries up once a model reaches her early 20s and her skin is not as young. . . . Chambers knew she wanted out of the business when she found herself dressed as a green bean for a vitamin advertising campaign. . . .



CAREER CHANGE

Once Chambers turned 28, she realized that the work was not going to improve and she started to look at other options. She had been fascinated by medicine since she was 10. “I cut my finger and needed stitches. The doctor explained the procedure to me and I was so interested,” she recalled.

She started to do an Emergency Medical Training course and really enjoyed the challenge. The next logical step was to do the paramedic training. “That involved a very intense course, two years’ work squeezed into one,” she said. . . .

Chambers completed the training and soon found herself immersed in the work. “Despite the dangers, I love it,” she said. “Most of us are adrenaline junkies. We love the more exciting jobs where people have been shot or someone has fallen under a train.” . . .

Chambers enjoys the down-to-earth nature of the job, an atmosphere in which colleagues are close. . . . One of the first partners she had on the job was Eddie Cabellero. They worked together in Brooklyn. Caballero was surprised at first that a fashion model would want to work as a paramedic. . . . Caballero said, “Rhona may not fit the typical description of a paramedic, but she epitomizes all the important qualities of what makes an excellent paramedic. She is knowledgeable and loves helping people.” . . .

Chambers admits that there are unsavory aspects to the job, and distressing incidents, such as when she was punched when she was pregnant. . . . “People get angry with us if they think we are not doing enough to help the victim,” she said. “I can understand that. They are frightened and don’t realize that we have all the same equipment as an emergency room. . . .

Chambers clearly relishes the work, and does not miss the fickle world of fashion. “We are making a difference and helping people,” she said. “I have no interest in clothes designers now, no interest at all.” . . .

Chambers is aware of the hectic nature of her job and the toll it can take. “The burnout factor is high for paramedics,” she said. “You can’t really be a full-time paramedic at 50, but if I could, I would like to do this for the rest of my life.”

AFTER READING

A Respond to the reading

1 Choose one of the following ways to respond to a reading:

- *Freewriting* (see page 2)
- *Response Questions* (see page 9)
- *Double Entry Response* (see page 26)

2 Share your response with your group. Afterwards, explain why you chose the particular reading response you did.

B Find positive and negative points

- 1 Using information from the reading, fill out the chart below with positive and negative features of being a model and being a paramedic.

Occupation	Positive Points	Negative Points
Model		
Paramedic		

- 2 Compare your chart with those of members of your group. Discuss whether or not you would agree with Rhona Chambers's career choice.

HOW IT'S WRITTEN

Discover how writers use questions

- 1 Read about a strategy writers may keep in mind when writing about a topic.



The Reporter's Formula

Newspaper reporters try to answer several questions to give their readers the information they need. This is called the “reporter’s formula.” Other writers use this formula, too. The questions begin with these words:

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Answering these questions can help you as both a reader and as a writer. As a reader, the questions can help you find and organize the important information from a piece of writing. As a writer, the questions help you gather ideas and make sure you include the essential points about a topic.

- 2 With your group, discuss what questions Freeman asked and answered to develop “The Model Medic.”
- 3 What would you like Freeman to tell you more about? Write down two or three questions you would like to ask her.
- 4 Share your questions with the class.

TOPICS FOR WRITING

Choose one topic to write about

Whichever topic you choose, you are going to interview someone. You will need to find out about the type of work the person does, the kinds of equipment or tools he or she uses, how the person came to do this work, how the person feels about the work, and difficulties the person has had to overcome. When you write, make sure you include a description of the person and your thoughts about what he or she does. Include quotes in your essay. When doing the interview, follow the steps given in the toolbox *Interview Tips*.

- 1 Write about a person who is doing a dangerous or highly skilled job.
- 2 Write about a person who is doing a job you would like to do some day.
- 3 Write about a person who is doing volunteer work that is helping to make people's lives better.



Interview Tips

- Make a list of questions. Use questions in the reporter's formula to get started. (See the toolbox *The Reporter's Formula* on the opposite page.)
- Share your questions with someone else and see if you can think of other questions you could add to your list.
- Put your questions in a logical order.
- Think of ways to encourage the person to tell you one or two anecdotes (stories).
- Choose a person to interview that you can go back to in case you want to do a follow-up interview.
- If you can, record the interview on tape; otherwise, make sure you take good notes.

AFTER WRITING

Share your writing

- 1 Share your writing with classmates who chose the same topic as you.
- 2 Report back to the class about what was similar or different about each person's writing, both in *what* they wrote and *how* they wrote it. Tell the class about any memorable quotes in your classmates' writings.

Writer's Tip



Get people talking. Learn to ask questions that will elicit answers about what is most interesting or vivid in their lives . . . Whatever form of nonfiction you write, it will come alive in proportion to the number of "quotes" that you can weave into it naturally as you go along.

William Zinsser

- 3 Exchange papers with a classmate who wrote on a different topic. Read your partner's essay. Then write down two or three questions that will help your partner add more information or details to the essay.
- 4 Write some notes to yourself about how to further develop your essay. Include a list of additional information you need from the person you interviewed.

Writer's Tip



There are an enormous number of people out there with invaluable information to share with you, and all you have to do is pick up the phone. They love it when you do, just as you love it when people ask if they can pick your brain about something you happen to know a great deal about.

Anne Lamott



WORK: REVISION

A Choose one piece of writing

- 1 Reread the pieces you wrote for the **Topics for Writing** sections of **WORK**. Also read any feedback from classmates and notes you wrote for yourself for each piece.
- 2 Pick one piece to revise.

B Improve the beginning

- 1 Read about what beginnings should do.



Beginnings

Smart writers try to write an opening that “hooks” the reader right away. Many writers write this opening after they have written their first draft and know what they are going to say. They then go back to the beginning and revise the opening, looking for a way to catch the reader’s attention.

Once you have the reader’s attention, you have to hold it. You want to make the reader continue to read. Writers do this in many ways. Essay writers usually reveal the message, main point, or topic in a general way and then focus the reader’s attention on a particular aspect of the subject. Story writers may describe a place, a mood, and a character that reveal where the story is going.

In summary, a good beginning should do two things:

- **Get the reader’s attention:** Ask a question. Tell a relevant anecdote. Start with a story that is an example of your point. Use a quote.
- **Focus the readers’ attention:** Let the reader know what you’re going to write about and the aspect of the subject you want him or her to think about. Don’t give too much general information; you may bore the reader. Get quickly to your own focus or the perspective you’re presenting. But don’t be too blunt; don’t say, “I’m going to tell you about . . .”

- 2 With a partner, reread the first sentences of each of the pieces in this section, **WORK** (“The First Job,” “Behind the Counter,” “To be of use,” and “The Model Medic”). Discuss whether or not the writers succeeded in hooking you into the texts. If you think they did, discuss how they did it.
- 3 Now look at the beginning of your essay. Does it make your reader want to read more? Ask your partner for an opinion.
- 4 Think of at least three different ways to begin your essay. Try them out on your partner. Finally, choose one and include it in your final draft.

C Share your writing

- 1 Read your writing to your group.
- 2 With your group, choose one piece of writing to read to the class.

Writer's Tip



[T]he lead must capture the reader immediately and force him [or her] to keep reading. It must cajole him [or her] with freshness or novelty or paradox, or with humor, or with surprise, or with an unusual idea, or an interesting fact, or a question.

William Zinsser