



Presentation Guide: 12 Pretty Good Hooks

Use these 12 ideas to get your audience engaged and interested in what you have to say. This guide supplements the blog post: <http://www.rapidstartleadership.com/12-killer-hooks-for-your-next-presentation/> and uses the subject of “Socks” as an example.

HOOK	DESCRIPTION	TIPS
1. Make a provocative claim	Say something bold, original, unexpected Challenge common beliefs Ex: <i>“Socks are more important than food.”</i>	Make these your first words; speak slowly and clearly; repeat the claim; ask if anyone agrees
2. Tell a joke	Jokes are a form of story that gets audience attention; relate the joke to the topic	Keep it clean, appropriate; test it out with friends; if it bombs, just keep going
3. Tell a story	Stories create immediate interest and connection; keep it short, and relevant. Ex: <i>“I was almost fired over a pair of socks.”</i>	Start right in with the story; keep it fairly short and on topic; then, <i>“I tell you this story because...”</i>
4. Show a video	A visual form of story-telling; keep it short, relevant; effective as a demonstration of your subject; funny ones help break the ice	Arrive early, test all the AV gear; have someone help run the gear so you can focus on talking
5. Ask a couple questions	Asking questions engages people’s minds and focuses them. Ex: <i>“What is the most important item of clothing you own?”</i>	Ask several questions in a row; let people offer answers; don’t judge; get several responses for each
6. Show a picture	Display a picture of something related to the topic; talk about, what it is and means, Ex: <i>“Who can tell me what this is?”</i>	Arrive early, test the AV gear; try unusual photo angles, extreme close-ups, odd lighting
7. Ask a rhetorical question	Use a question to get people thinking, but you’re not looking for an answer. Ex: <i>“Do socks define us as humans?”</i>	You can ask several different ones in a row, then talk about how you’ll answer the questions.
8. Set an expectation	State what’s in it for them; how will it help Ex: <i>“In 10 minutes I’m going to show you 10 unbelievable things about... socks.”</i>	Be clear about what they will get out of it and how it will be useful to them; maybe keep count as you go
9. Show them an object	Bring something to hold up and talk about; talk about what it is and how it’s relevant Ex: <i>“Who had a sock monkey as a kid?”</i>	Don’t show it until you are ready to begin, <u>or</u> create curiosity by having it on display as people arrive
10. Reference an historical event	Mention a relevant date/event and talk about how it relates Ex: <i>“Did you know 25 years ago today...”</i>	The more unusual or surprising the event the better; use internet search to help
11. Use a quote	Say it or project it prominently; credit the speaker; explain how it relates. Ex: <i>“Einstein was smart, except when it came to socks.”</i>	Shorter is better, less well-known quotes by famous people are good; use bold or color on key words
12. Ask, “What if...” or “Imagine...”	Challenge assumptions, change rules, alter their perspective to engage their minds Ex: <i>“Imagine a world without socks...”</i>	Ask the question, pause, ask it again; try changing word emphasis each time, or ask in a different way

For best effect, start immediately with the hook, then introduce yourself, set expectations, and continue with your presentation. Example from hook #1. “[hook] Hi, my name is ___ and in the next ten minutes, I’m going to show you seven amazing things about socks that will convince you that socks really are more important than food.”