

Checklist for The End of the Beginning

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"This is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning." [Winston Churchill](#)

The End of the Beginning

Most of us storywriters are obsessed with the openings to stories—that is, how to effectively start the plot and introduce the characters. But the opening has to end for the plot to really get underway. So as you're revising your opening, look at the last few paragraphs of the first chapter or wherever your "opening" ends. Does the end of your opening match the opening for power or tension?



Here are a few "beginning ending" options that you can experiment with in the end of your first chapter or section (you might find you can merge a few to make the perfect opening "end" :

- ✓ End the start on a disaster or surprise, like the discovery of a crime.
- ✓ Introduce the conflict that the rest of the story will explore.
- ✓ Hint at backstory, or at least indicates there is some relevant backstory (a hint of trouble from the past).
- ✓ Define the start of the character journey (like she's unable to trust).
- ✓ Show a symbolic object (like a piano) which gives a clue to the emotional secret within the character.
- ✓ Give a sense of why this person or this place has to change (like in a segregated Georgia town in 1963).
- ✓ Set up a "time bomb" that might not seem a big deal now but will turn out to be very important later (like he alienates someone or she throws away a letter).
- ✓ Start some aspect of the central relationship.
- ✓ Finish with a quick moment that makes clear what type of book this is (so if it's a comedy, the opening ends with a funny moment, or if it's a thriller, the opening ends with something scary).
- ✓ End with the inevitability of change.

For more discussion and examples of the end of the beginning, [check out my blog post here](#). Got a plot question? [Email me: rasley@gmail.com](mailto:rasley@gmail.com)