

11 of literature's best closing lines

By [Laura Hale Brockway](#) | Posted: October 20, 2016



First sentences can make or break even the most brilliantly crafted article.

Lead sentences are often the deciding factor in whether readers keep reading. This is why we writers struggle so desperately to find the perfect opening lines.

Closing lines are a different story.

They're not nearly as troublesome for corporate communicators—but in fiction, an author's final lines can provide closure, leave readers hanging or take the story in an entirely new direction.

For inspiration, here are a few outstanding closing lines from literature:

1. "But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union."—"Emma," by Jane Austen

2. "I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath, and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."—"Wuthering Heights," by Emily Bronte

3. "The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky — seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness."—"Heart of Darkness," by Joseph Conrad

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4. "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."—"The Great Gatsby," by F. Scott Fitzgerald

5. "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."—"Animal Farm," by George Orwell

6. "He loved Big Brother."—"1984," by George Orwell

7. "He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance."—"Frankenstein," by Mary Shelley

8. "Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."—"Vanity Fair," by William Makepeace Thackeray

9. "He knelt by the bed and bent over her, draining their last moment to its lees;

and in the silence there passed between them the word which made all clear."—"House of Mirth," by Edith Wharton

10. "He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was."—"The Picture of Dorian Gray," by Oscar Wilde

11. "If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumber'd here

While these visions did appear.

And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,

Gentles, do not reprehend:

If you pardon, we will mend:

And, as I am an honest Puck,

If we have unearned luck

Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,

We will make amends ere long;

Else the Puck a liar call;

So, good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,

And Robin shall restore amends."—"A Midsummer Night's Dream," by William Shakespeare

How about you, *PR Daily* readers? What are your favorite closing lines?

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