

OPEN LOOPS AND CLIFFHANGERS IN COPYWRITING





When people read your copy, they probably imagine what it would be like to buy your product. How much better their life would be.

They'll do this subconsciously while they're still listening to you or reading your words. If that image is in any way incomplete or fuzzy, then something's wrong with your sales letter.

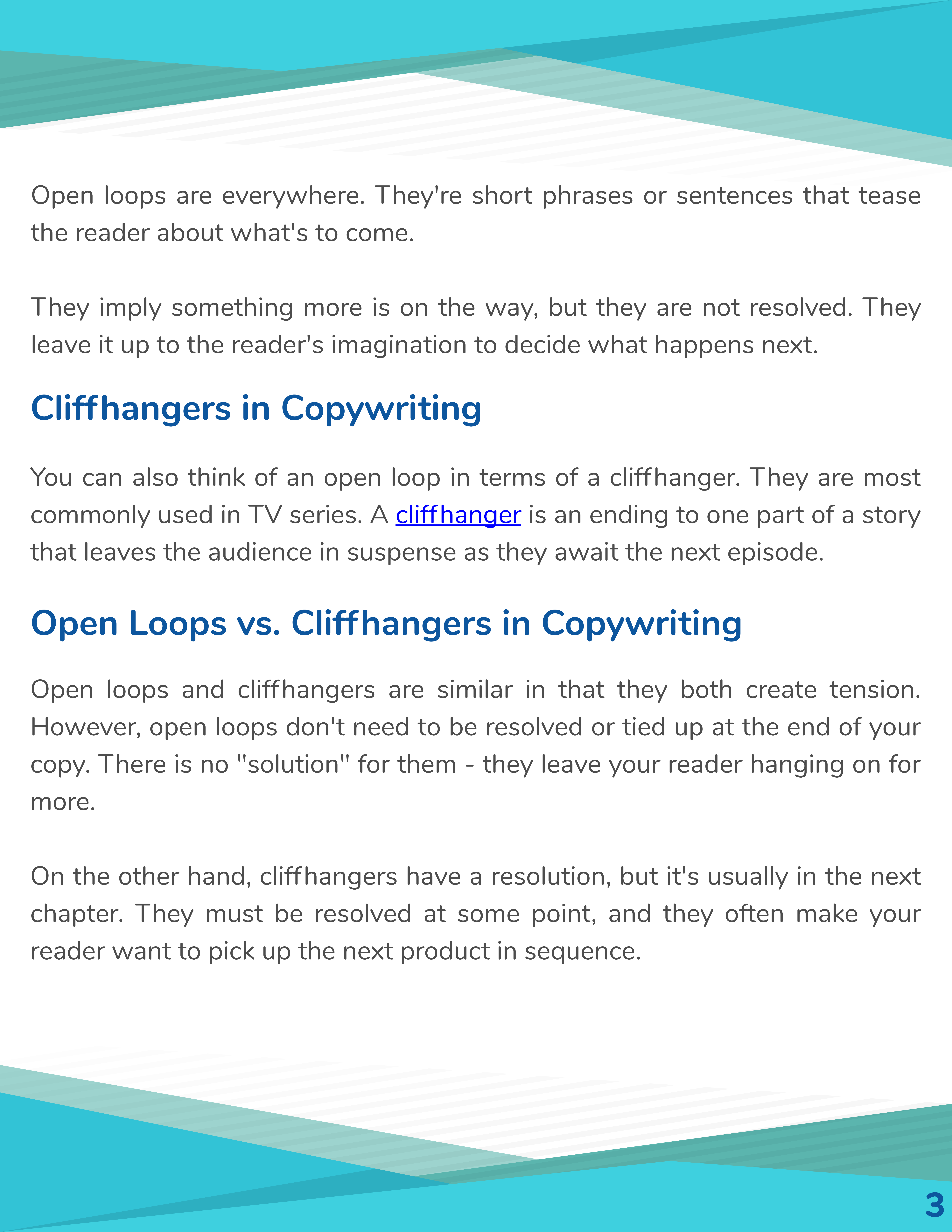
While reaching your audience in the 21st century is easy, having their undivided attention is another matter. Our attention spans are becoming shorter. We're easily distracted by competing stimuli, like the Internet and smartphones.

But there's one way to keep your audience engaged: By dangling an open loop in front of them.

The Open Loop Copywriting Formula

An [open loop](#) is an unresolved thread in your copy that keeps the reader hanging on, anxious for more. They'll be asking themselves, "What comes next?"

This formula is meant to help your reader stay engaged and interested in reading the next line of your copy. A good open-loop should make them think, feel or ask a question.



Open loops are everywhere. They're short phrases or sentences that tease the reader about what's to come.

They imply something more is on the way, but they are not resolved. They leave it up to the reader's imagination to decide what happens next.

Cliffhangers in Copywriting

You can also think of an open loop in terms of a cliffhanger. They are most commonly used in TV series. A [cliffhanger](#) is an ending to one part of a story that leaves the audience in suspense as they await the next episode.

Open Loops vs. Cliffhangers in Copywriting

Open loops and cliffhangers are similar in that they both create tension. However, open loops don't need to be resolved or tied up at the end of your copy. There is no "solution" for them - they leave your reader hanging on for more.

On the other hand, cliffhangers have a resolution, but it's usually in the next chapter. They must be resolved at some point, and they often make your reader want to pick up the next product in sequence.

Benefits of Using Open Loops and Cliffhangers in Copywriting

Open loops and cliffhangers have several benefits. [They keep your reader interested](#) in what you're saying, even when their eyes or ears are no longer focused on the words.

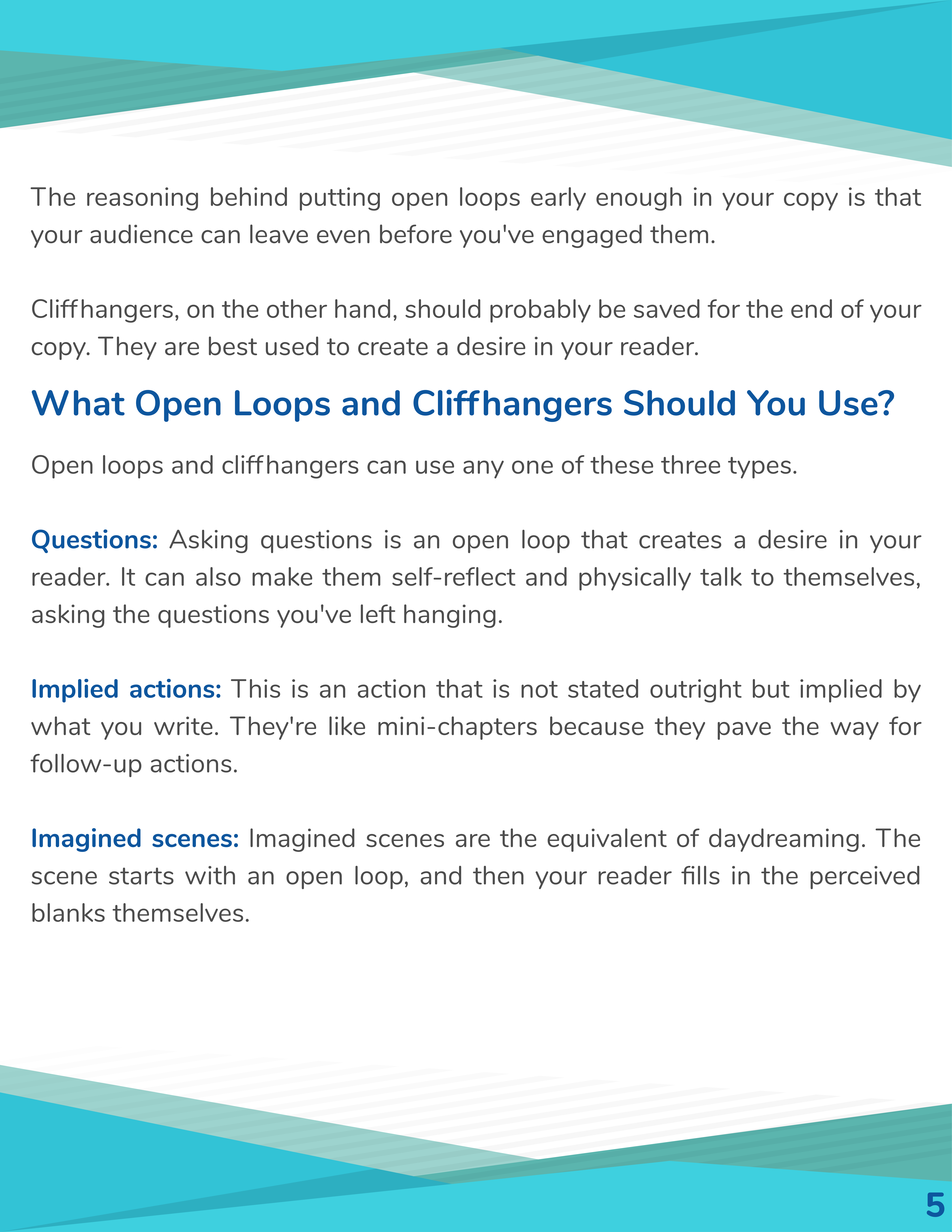
They also add a sense of mystery and intrigue to your copy. Open loops make your reader stop and think about what comes next (in an imaginary scene). This makes them more [engaged in your copy](#).

But the main benefit is that they keep your audience moving through your sales letter. They also allow you to subtly remind your audience of what's coming next, so they continue to read after the open loop or cliffhanger.

When Should You Use Open Loops and Cliffhangers in Your Copy?

While open loops and cliffhangers are powerful storytelling tools for your copy, you must take care not to use them too much.

When to use open loops in your copy is debatable, but most copywriters recommend using them as early as possible in your copy. However, you can still use loops at the end of your copy if you wish to lead your audiences to other articles or posts.



The reasoning behind putting open loops early enough in your copy is that your audience can leave even before you've engaged them.

Cliffhangers, on the other hand, should probably be saved for the end of your copy. They are best used to create a desire in your reader.

What Open Loops and Cliffhangers Should You Use?

Open loops and cliffhangers can use any one of these three types.

Questions: Asking questions is an open loop that creates a desire in your reader. It can also make them self-reflect and physically talk to themselves, asking the questions you've left hanging.

Implied actions: This is an action that is not stated outright but implied by what you write. They're like mini-chapters because they pave the way for follow-up actions.

Imagined scenes: Imagined scenes are the equivalent of daydreaming. The scene starts with an open loop, and then your reader fills in the perceived blanks themselves.

How to weave Open Loops and Cliffhangers into Your Copy

1. Start with a Fear or Misperception- Fear appeals are commonly used to get people to take action. They highlight a problem that can happen, then offer a solution that you have.

2. Give your reader something to chew on- This is an open loop that makes your readers self-reflect or talk to themselves. It's powerful in evoking emotions, too.

3. End with a question (and answer)- Ending with questions implies that there's more, but you're already conversing with your audience. It can also help you introduce a new product or topic.

4. Introduce an imaginary scene- This uses your readers' imagination to help them visualize what's going on in the story and how they might respond if they were there/in this situation.

Conclusion

Using open loops and cliffhangers in your copywriting can help you increase engagement, drive traffic to another article or post, and create desire among your readers. Open loops and cliffhangers are great hooks that keep your audience reading after they've been introduced to a problem and create a desire for more.