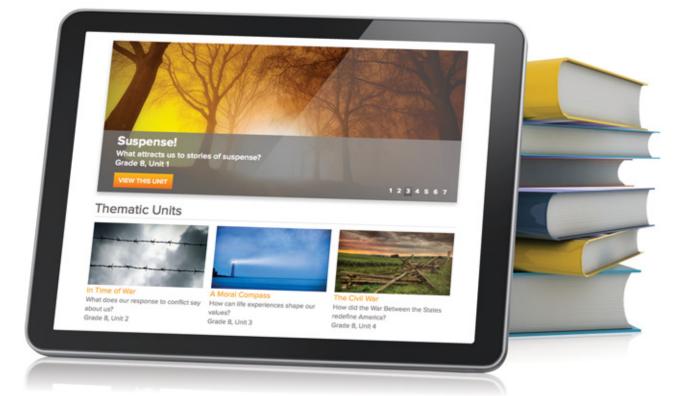
CALIFORNIA **StudySync**[®] Reading & Writing Companion



GRADE 8 UNITS

Suspense! • In Time of War A Moral Compass • The Civil War

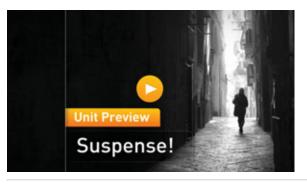
Reading & Writing Companion

GRADE 8 UNITS

Suspense! • In Time of War A Moral Compass • The Civil War



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Please note that excerpts and passages in the StudySync® library and this workbook are intended as touchstones to generate interest in an author's work. The excerpts and passages do not substitute for the reading of entire texts, and StudySync® strongly recommends that students seek out and purchase the whole literary or informational work in order to experience it as the author intended. Links to online resellers are available in our digital library. In addition, complete works may be ordered through an authorized reseller by filling out and returning to StudySync® the order form enclosed in this workbook.

Reading & Writing Companion

STUDENT GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

WW elcome to the StudySync Reading and Writing Companion! In this booklet, you will find a collection of readings based on the theme of the unit you are studying. As you work through the readings, you will be asked to answer questions and perform a variety of tasks designed to help you closely analyze and understand each text selection. Read on for an explanation of each section of this booklet.

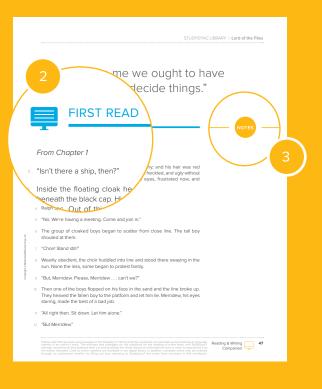
what's Due



In each Core ELA Unit you will read texts and text excerpts that share a common theme, despite their different genres, time periods, and authors. Each reading encourages a closer look with questions and a short writing assignment.



hen a plane carryi themselves turns into a increasingly the youths' attem War II, and claimed his depiction of the brutal struggle forperinces watching how men reacted in cerved in the Royal Navel to a second group. After a wary sorting out, behavior was



INTRODUCTION

An Introduction to each text provides historical context for your reading as well as information about the author. You will also learn about the genre of the excerpt and the year in which it was written.

FIRST READ

During your first reading of each excerpt, you should just try to get a general idea of the content and message of the reading. Don't worry if there are parts you don't understand or words that are unfamiliar to you. You'll have an opportunity later to dive deeper into the text.

NOTES

Many times, while working through the activities after each text, you will be asked to **annotate** or **make annotations** about what you are reading. This means that you should highlight or underline words in the text and use the "Notes" column to make comments or jot down any questions you may have. You may also want to note any unfamiliar vocabulary words here.

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THINK QUESTIONS

These questions will ask you to start thinking critically about the text, asking specific questions about its purpose, and making connections to your prior knowledge and reading experiences. To answer these questions, you should go back to the text and draw upon specific evidence that you find there to support your responses. You will also begin to explore some of the more challenging vocabulary words used in the excerpt.

CLOSE READ & FOCUS QUESTIONS

After you have completed the First Read, you will then be asked to go back and read the excerpt more closely and critically. Before you begin your Close Read, you should read through the Focus Questions to get an idea of the concepts you will want to focus on during your second reading. You should work through the Focus Questions by making annotations, highlighting important concepts, and writing notes or questions in the "Notes" column. Depending on instructions from your teacher, you may need to respond online or use a separate piece of paper to start expanding on your thoughts and ideas.

WRITING PROMPT

Your study of each excerpt or selection will end with a writing assignment. To complete this assignment, you should use your notes, annotations, and answers to both the Think and Focus Questions. Be sure to read the prompt carefully and address each part of it in your writing assignment.



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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TEXTS

The English Language Development texts and activities take a closer look at the language choices that authors make to communicate their ideas. Individual and group activities will help develop your understanding of each text.

Reread paragraphs Meaningful Interactio	8–14 of i	, complete the Using Language and	
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Now her eyes were begging for	help to understand.		
	knew that there was no going bac	k to who I had been.	
- I didn't mention that part when I t			
"What aren't you telling me?" she	frowned.		
		Finally, the narrator describes the present again.	Conyright © Bo drheadE d Learning , LLC
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REREAD

After you have completed the First Read, you will have two additional opportunities to revisit portions of the excerpt more closely. The directions for each reread will specify which paragraphs or sections you should focus on.

USING LANGUAGE

These questions will ask you to analyze the author's use of language and conventions in the text. You may be asked to write in sentence frames, fill in a chart, or you may simply choose between multiple-choice options. To answer these questions, you should read the exercise carefully and go back in the text as necessary to accurately complete the activity.

MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS & SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

After each reading, you will participate in a group activity or discussion with your peers. You may be provided speaking frames to guide your discussions or writing frames to support your group work. To complete these activities, you should revisit the excerpt for textual evidence and support. When you finish, use the Self-Assessment Rubric to evaluate how well you participated and collaborated.

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EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT

The Extended Writing Project is your opportunity to explore the theme of each unit in a longer written work. You will draw information from your readings, research, and own life experiences to complete the assignment.

WRITING PROJECT

After you have read all of the unit text selections, you will move on to a writing project. Each project will guide you through the process of writing an argumentative, narrative, informative, or literary analysis essay. Student models and graphic organizers will provide guidance and help you organize your thoughts as you plan and write your essay. Throughout the project, you will also study and work on specific writing skills to help you develop different portions of your writing.

WRITING PROCESS STEPS

There are five steps in the writing process: **Prewrite**, **Plan**, **Draft**, **Revise**, and **Edit**, **Proofread**, **and Publish**. During each step, you will form and shape your writing project so that you can effectively express your ideas. Lessons focus on one step at a time, and you will have the chance to receive feedback from your peers and teacher.

WRITING SKILLS

Each Writing Skill lesson focuses on a specific strategy or technique that you will use during your writing project. The lessons begin by analyzing a student model or mentor text, and give you a chance to learn and practice the skill on its own. Then, you will have the opportunity to apply each new skill to improve the writing in your own project.

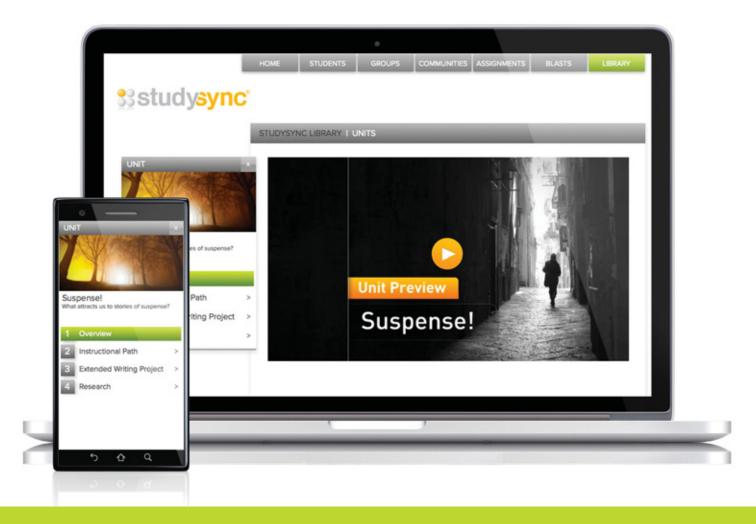


Reading & Writing Companion

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Reading & Writing Companion



What attracts us to stories of suspense?

Suspense!



UNIT 1 What attracts us to stories of suspense?

Suspense!



4	Let 'Em Play God NON-FICTION Alfred Hitchcock
9	The Monkey's Paw FICTION W.W. Jacobs
23	Sorry, Wrong Number DRAMA Lucille Fletcher
28	Violence in the Movies NON-FICTION Point/Counterpoint
34	A Night to Remember NON-FICTION Walter Lord
40	Cujo FICTION Stephen King
46	Lord of the Flies FICTION William Golding
53	Ten Days in a Mad-House (Chapter

NON-FICTION Nellie Bly

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IV)

60	The Tell-Tale Heart FICTION Edgar Allan Poe
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POETRY Edgar Allan Poe

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TEXTS
78	How to Create Suspense FICTION
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EXTENDED WRITING PROJECT

95	Extended Writing Project: Narrative Writing
99	SKILL: Organize Narrative Writing
102	Extended Writing Project: Prewrite
105	SKILL: Introductions
107	SKILL: Narrative Techniques and Sequencing
112	Extended Writing Project: Plan
114	SKILL: Writing Dialogue
118	SKILL: Conclusions
121	Extended Writing Project: Draft
123	SKILL: Transitions
125	Extended Writing Project: Revise
127	Extended Writing Project: Edit, Proofread, and Publish

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Text Fulfillment through StudySync

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Reading & Writing Companion ____

3

SORRY, WRONG NUMBER

DRAMA Lucille Fletcher 1948

INTRODUCTION

studysynco

ucille Fletcher's play from the 1940s (famously produced for radio audiences only as well) relies on voices and sound effects to create a world of increasing fear for a neurotic woman alone in her New York apartment. The excerpt is from the opening scene.

"Make it quick. As little blood as possible."



EXCERPT FROM ACT ONE

- 1 [SCENE: As curtain rises, we see a divided stage, only the center part of which is lighted and furnished as MRS. STEVENSON'S bedroom. Expensive, rather **fussy** furnishings. A large bed, on which MRS. STEVENSON, clad in bed jacket, is lying. A night-table close by, with phone, lighted lamp, and pill bottles. A mantle, with clock, right. A closed door, right. A window, with curtains closed, rear. The set is lit by one lamp on a night-table. It is enclosed by three flats. Beyond this central set, the stage, on either side, is in darkness.
- ² MRS. STEVENSON is dialing a number on the phone, as curtain rises. She listens to phone, slams down receiver in irritation. As she does so, we hear sound of a train roaring by in the distance. She reaches for her pill bottle, pours herself a glass of water, shakes out pill, swallows it, then reaches for the phone again, dials number nervously.]
- 3 [SOUND: Number being dialed on phone: Busy signal.]
- 4 MRS. STEVENSON [*a querulous,* self-centered *neurotic*]: Oh—dear! [*Slams* down receiver, dials OPERATOR.]
- ⁵ [SCENE: A spotlight, left of side flat, picks up out of **peripheral** darkness, figure of 1st OPERATOR, sitting with headphones at small table. If spotlight not available, use flashlight, clicked on by 1st OPERATOR, illuminating her face.]
- 6 OPERATOR: Your call, please?
- 7 MRS. STEVENSON: Operator? I've been dialing Murray Hill 4-0098 now for the last three-quarters of an hour, and the line is always busy. But I don't see how it *could* be busy that long. Will you try it for me please?

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- 8 OPERATOR: Murray Hill 4-0098? One moment, please.
- 9 [SCENE: She makes gesture of plugging in call through switchboard.]
- ¹⁰ MRS. STEVENSON: I don't see how it could be busy all this time. It's my husband's office. He's working late tonight, and I'm all alone here in this house. My health is very poor—and I've been feeling so nervous all day—
- 11 OPERATOR: Ringing Murray Hill 4-0098.
- 12 [SOUND: Phone buzz. It rings three times. Receiver is picked up at other end.]
- 13 MAN: Hello.
- 14 MRS. STEVENSON: Hello? [A little puzzled.] Hello. Is Mr. Stevenson there?
- 15 MAN [into phone, as though he had not heard]: Hello. [Louder.] Hello.
- 16 SECOND MAN [slow, heavy quality, faintly foreign accent]: Hello.
- 17 FIRST MAN: Hello. George?
- 18 GEORGE: Yes, sir.
- 19 MRS. STEVENSON *[louder and more imperious, to phone]*: Hello. Who's this? What number am I calling, please?
- ²⁰ FIRST MAN: We have heard from our client. He says the coast is clear for tonight.
- 21 GEORGE: Yes, sir.
- 22 FIRST MAN: Where are you now?
- GEORGE: In a phone booth.
- ²⁴ FIRST MAN: Okay. You know the address. At eleven o'clock the private patrolman goes around to the bar on Second Avenue for a beer. Be sure that all the lights downstairs are out. There should be only one light visible from the street. At eleven fifteen a subway train crosses the bridge. It makes a noise in case her window is open and she should scream.
- MRS. STEVENSON [shocked]: Oh—hello! What number is this, please?
- GEORGE: Okay. I understand.



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- 27 FIRST MAN: Make it quick. As little blood as possible. Our client does not wish to make her suffer long.
 - 28 GEORGE: A knife okay, sir?
 - ²⁹ FIRST MAN: Yes. A knife will be okay. And remember—remove the rings and bracelets, and the jewelry in the bureau drawer. Our client wishes it to look like a simple robbery.
 - 30 [SOUND: A bland buzzing signal.]
 - 31 MRS. STEVENSON [*clicking phone*]: Oh! [*Bland buzzing signal continues. She hangs up.*] How awful! How unspeakably—

Excerpted from *Sorry, Wrong Number* by Lucille Fletcher, published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc.



- How is Mrs. Stevenson feeling as the scene begins? How do we know she is feeling that way? Cite details from the text to explain her condition.
- How does the setting help emphasize that Mrs. Stevenson is alone? Cite evidence from the stage directions to explain.
- 3. Why do you think Mrs. Stevenson explains her health condition to the operator? Use textual evidence to explain your inference.
- Use context to determine the meaning of the word **imperious** as it is used in paragraph 19 of "Sorry, Wrong Number." Write your definition of "imperious" and explain how you figured it out.
- 5. Knowing that the Greek prefix *peri* means "about" or "around," you can use this knowledge and context to help you determine the meaning of **peripheral** in paragraph 5. Write your definition of peripheral and explain how you figured it out.

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Reread the short drama "Sorry, Wrong Number." As you reread, complete the Focus Questions below. Then use your answers and annotations from the questions to help you complete the Writing Prompt.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How do Mrs. Stevenson's character traits affect the plot of the play? What can you infer about her situation based on her short exchange with the telephone operator? Cite specific evidence from the text in your response.
- From the information the author provides about the setting, and the details she reveals about the murder plot Mrs. Stevenson overhears, what inferences can you make that suggest Mrs. Stevenson herself might be the intended victim? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- How does the author use the stage directions in the play to reveal aspects of Mrs. Stevenson's character? Cite text evidence to support your answer.

- Use your understanding of plot development to help you summarize the exposition of the drama. Highlight evidence from the text that will help support your answer.
- 5. Mrs. Stevenson cannot be heard by the other callers, and she slowly realizes that she is hearing something she obviously was not intended to hear. Highlight the part of the text where Mrs. Stevenson and the reader know for sure that the callers are planning a crime. What draws the reader into the story's suspense?

WRITING PROMPT

Analyze the ways in which fear and suspense is introduced and maintained during this play's developing plot. Consider how the suspense naturally causes the reader to make predictions about what may happen in the text. Consider the sound effects, the content and structure of the lines, and the way the characters' voices may sound when the lines are spoken aloud on a stage. Use textual evidence from *Sorry, Wrong Number* to support your analysis.

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Reading & Writing

Companion

HOW TO CREATE SUSPENSE

English Language Development

FICTION

INTRODUCTION

tingling on the back of your neck, a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach—nothing grabs a reader's attention quite like suspense. The following article, "How to Create Suspense," is written from the point of view of a horror novelist and explores several elements of suspense. The essay explains how the information that you add to a story, and the details that you choose to leave out, can keep readers on the edge of their seats.

"Becca thinks it is the pizza she ordered, but the reader knows the man is standing on the porch."



FIRST READ

- 1 The feeling of excitement or nervousness people feel when they do not know what is going to happen is called **suspense**. People feel suspense when watching a scary movie.
- I am an author of horror stories. When I write, I use several methods to create suspense. First of all, the author needs to give the reader the whole story, not only one side. The reader needs to know what both the hero and the villain are doing in order to understand their actions. Readers need to care about the characters. Also, the characters and their actions need to be **plausible**, or believable. For suspense to happen, readers need to **anticipate** what is going to happen. Readers can't guess what unbelievable characters will do.
- Another way to build suspense is to have a time limit. For example, some stories might have a bomb that is going to explode in 60 minutes or an **asteroid** that will hit Earth in 24 hours.
- ⁴ Finally, the stakes have to be high. The main character must be willing to do anything to stop the bad thing from happening.
- ⁵ To explain how I create suspense, let's explore my novel *Alone in the Dark.* In *Alone in the Dark,* a woman named Becca is babysitting her sister's baby for the first time. Becca has just put the baby to sleep when the power goes out. She is **frustrated**, but not scared. In the next chapter, the reader learns why the lights went out. A man is standing outside near the electrical wires.
- At that moment, you as the reader should start to feel suspense. You do not know what the man will do, but you do know something is wrong. You want to read on to find out what happens. Later in the book, the doorbell rings. Becca thinks it is the pizza she ordered, but the reader knows the man is standing on the porch. He holds something behind his back. Becca walks toward the door.

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- 7 At this point, you are on the edge of your seat, yelling at Becca to not open the door. You feel this suspense because I, the writer, told you a stranger is outside. If I had not written that, Becca would simply be a woman who ordered pizza. Suspense happens when you know an action is dangerous.
- 8 Since you know Becca will be safe when her sister returns, the story has a time limit. Because Becca needs to protect her sister's baby, the stakes are high. You care what happens to Becca because you like her and admire her for protecting the baby. All of these elements create a suspenseful story that encourages the reader to keep reading.

USING LANGUAGE CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.6.a.Ex

Write the key idea from the text in the blank for each sentence below.

1. What is suspense?

Suspense is the feeling of ______ people feel when _____

2. What does the author need to tell the reader in order to create suspense?

The author needs to tell the reader _____

3. What must the main character need to be willing to do for suspense to happen?

The main character must be willing to _____

4. Why do readers of Alone in the Dark want to tell Becca not to open the door?

Readers of Alone in the Dark want to tell Becca not to open the door because _____

5. What three elements of suspense does Alone in the Dark have?

Alone in the Dark has a ______, a _____, a _____, and

Reading & Writing Companion Please note that excerpts and passages in the StudySync[®] library and this workbook are intended as touchstones to generate interest in an author's work. The excerpts and passages do not substitute for the reading of entire texts, and StudySync[®] strongly recommends that students seek out and purchase the whole literary or informational work in order to experience it as the author intended. Links to online resellers are available in our digital library. In addition, complete works may be ordered through an authorized reseller by filling out and returning to StudySync[®] the order form enclosed in this workbook.

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MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.6.a.EX

With your partner or group, identify the author's process when creating suspense in a novel and complete the writing frames below. Then use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your participation in the activity.

Fir	First, the author needs to				
An	other thing the author does is				
Fir	ally, the author creates a main character who				
	ork with your partner or group to identify the sequentiation of the sequence of the writing frames below.	ence of events in the novel Alone in the Dark and			
1.	At the beginning, a woman named Becca is	her sister's baby for the first time.			
2.	Becca has just put the baby to sleep when	suddenly goes out.			
3.	The lights went out because a	stands outside near the electrical wires.			
4.	The suspense builds as the	rings.			
5.	Becca thinks it is thestanding on the porch, holding something behind	she ordered, but is nis back.			
6.	Then Becca reaches for the				

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.4.EX

	4 I did this well.	3 I did this pretty well.	2 I did this a little bit.	1 I did not do this.
I took an active part with others in doing the activity.				
I contributed effectively to the group's decisions.				
I understood the author's process in the selection.				
I helped others understand the sequence of events in the selection.				
l completed the process and sequence activities carefully and accurately.				



Reread paragraphs 1–4 in "How to Create Suspense." After you reread, complete the Using Language and Meaningful Interactions activities.



USING LANGUAGE CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.6.b.Ex

Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks.

1. Why do scary movies make people feel suspense?

Scary movies make people feel suspense because _____

2. What can you infer that the author's books have, based on the second paragraph?

I can infer that _____

3. How does understanding a character's actions help build suspense?

Understanding a character's actions helps a reader _____

4. How does a time limit help create suspense?

A time limit helps create suspense by making the hero work quickly to stop the _____



MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.3.EX, ELD.PI.8.6.b.EX

Based on what you have read in "How to Create Suspense," make an inference about the author or how she builds suspense. Find evidence in the text to support your inference. Work with partners to practice convincing each other that your inference is valid. Use the speaking frames to support your discussion. Then, use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your participation in the discussion.

- In my opinion, the author ... because ...
- My inference is correct because . . .
- Why do you think the author said . . . ?
- I think . . . said that . . .
- I agree with . . . but . . .

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.4.EX

	4 I did this well.	3 I did this pretty well.	2 I did this a little bit.	1 I did not do this.
l expressed my opinion clearly.				
l listened carefully to others' opinions.				
I spoke respectfully when disagreeing with others.				
I was courteous when persuading others to share my view.				



Reread paragraphs 5–8 of "How to Create Suspense." After you reread, complete the Using Language and Meaningful Interactions activities.



In "How to Create Suspense," the author describes the sequence of events in the novel *Alone in the Dark*. Sort the statements into the correct order of events in the story.

Statements			
A man is standing outside.	The doorbell rings.	The power goes out.	

First	Then	Last

REANINGFUL INTERACTIONS CA-CCSS: ELD.PI.8.9.EX, ELD.PI.8.7.EX

What are the author's main ideas in "How to Create Suspense"? Write a short summary of the text and present it to the class. Work with partners in small groups to practice writing and presenting your summary. Use the writing frames to support your summary.

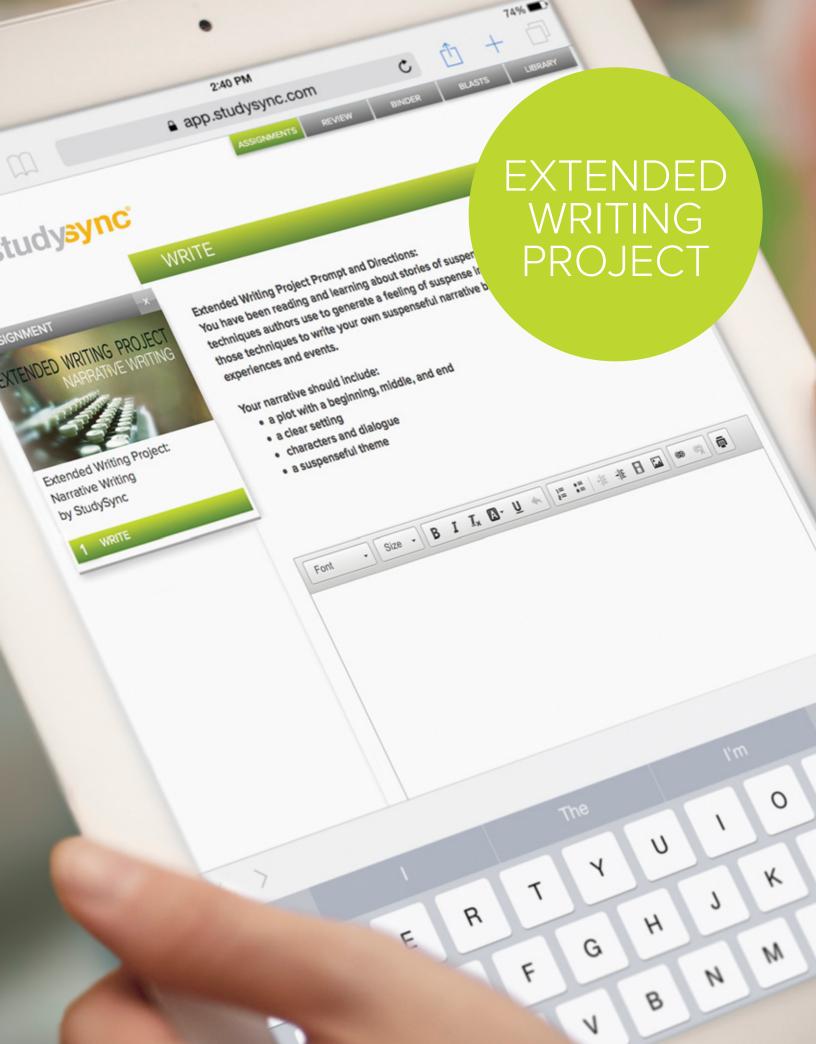
The author starts by saying _____

Then the author explains _____

The author ends by _____

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Reading & Writing Companion





NARRATIVE WRITING

WRITING PROMPT

You have been reading and learning about stories of suspense, in addition to studying techniques authors use to generate a feeling of suspense in readers. Now you will use those techniques to write your own suspenseful narrative based on real or imagined experiences and events.

Your essay should include:

- a plot with a beginning, middle, and end
- a clear setting
- characters and dialogue
- a suspenseful theme

Narrative writing tells a story of real or imagined experiences or events. Narratives can be fiction, such as stories and poems, or non-fiction, such as memoirs and personal essays. Good narrative writing uses effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences to convey a story to readers.

The features of narrative writing include:

- setting
- characters
- plot
- theme
- point of view

As you continue with this extended writing project, you'll receive more instruction and practice crafting each of the elements of narrative writing to create your own suspenseful narrative.





Before you get started on your own suspenseful narrative, read this excerpt from the beginning of a narrative that one student wrote in response to the writing prompt. As you read the model, highlight and annotate the features of narrative writing that this student included in her story.

The Silver Box

The night was so clear that if the Carey family had been standing in the front yard, beneath the clear dome that separated them from the atmosphere beyond, they would have seen the usual pools of dull light that had replaced bright stars since The Pollution. Beneath the dome, in the concrete structure that had become their new home, Finn and his father, Patrick Carey, played Robot Wars on the main screen of the family quarters, while Mrs. Caitlin Carey constructed solar garments on the table in the corner.

"I'll beat you yet!" shouted Mr. Carey, clicking frantically on his controller as the boy did the same, eyes glued to the screen. Caitlin sighed and applied new glue to the seams of the garment in front of her.

"You should stop this silliness and get to bed," she warned. "The sun will be coming up in just a few hours. I'll be turning in soon myself."

"I've got you!" shouted Finn, pressing one final button on his controller. The screen exploded in victory lights and then went dark. Finn grinned at his father, ignoring his mother's warning of imminent danger.

"We can't turn in yet," Patrick grumbled, tossing his controller to the floor. "He's still on his way."

Just then a chime sang from the dome, and the old man rose to open the hatch.

"He's here," breathed Finn, scrambling to stand near the entryway. The visitor entered and removed his shiny outer garments just inside the dome. He then stepped into the family quarters and introduced himself as Captain Burns.

"The solar rays are getting hotter," he told them, over a rare and refreshing glass of ice water. "I've been told there's a way to survive outside the domes, but no one has tried it yet."



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"Tell us what it is!" Mr. Carey said eagerly, and then began coughing. The visitor waited until he'd stopped.

"The answer lies here," the captain said, pulling a small, silver box from his pocket. "But as I said, no one has tried it yet. Well—without eluding the rays entirely." He coughed as well, and Mrs. Carey let out a barely audible giggle.

"How does it work?" asked Finn, eyes wide as he stared at the glistening box.

"It's designed to act as a personal shield. But, I'm not sure it's feasible. As I believe I've said, I wouldn't recommend trying it, even with the food supplies running so low."

Patrick reached for the box, and Finn's eyes followed as his father held it up in his palm.

"We're very hungry, captain," Mr. Carey said, flipping open the lid of the box to examine the buttons below. "Please, tell us how it works."

As the family gathered around, Captain Burns carefully explained to Mr. Carey how the device worked. Finn could feel both excitement and apprehension as Captain Burns methodically described what each button was for, and the consequences of making the wrong choice.

"I know this is asking a lot," Mr. Carey said nervously, "but let me try this device. I realize it's never worked successfully before, but I'm willing to take the risk. My family will soon need food, and this is our only chance."

Avoiding Mr. Carey's eyes, Captain Burns reluctantly shook his head, yes. Holding the box in his hands, Mr. Carey pulled it tightly to his chest. He prayed that he had made a sensible decision.







- What is the setting of this narrative? Identify two or more textual details that help identify the setting, and explain why you think the student included them. What does the setting tell you about the kind of story this is?
- 2. Describe the conflict, or main problem, of this story. Explain which details reveal the conflict, and explain why you think the student has chosen to include these details.
- 3. What suspenseful elements do you detect in this first reading of the student model narrative? How do these elements add to your interest in the story?

- 4. As you consider the writing prompt, which selections or other resources would you like to examine to help you create your own narrative?
- 5. Based on what you have read, listened to, or researched, how would you answer the question, *What attracts us to stories of suspense?*



SKILL: ORGANIZE NARRATIVE WRITING



Every narrative plot contains a **conflict,** or problem the characters must face. The conflict in a narrative is often developed throughout the story and revealed over time. A story's conflict builds to a climax or turning point, when the **characters**—the people or players in the narrative—are forced to take action.

This problem is presented by a **narrator**, who serves as the voice of the story. The narrator can tell the story in the first-person point of view (as a participant in the story) or in the third-person point of view (as an outside observer). The narrator serves as the reader's eyes, allowing readers to view the actions of the story.

Through the narrator, authors introduce characters and reveal details about their relationships to one another as the story unfolds. Characters are the driving force of a story. Their actions, thoughts, and dialogue move the plot forward as they encounter conflict and seek a resolution. Characters develop throughout a story and often undergo a significant change by the story's end.



IDENTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

- A story's narrator helps to orient readers with the details of the story, such as where and when the story takes place and who the story is about.
- Writers reveal information about characters over time, to help readers know and understand the players in the story.
- Writers build stories around a conflict that is interesting to readers. The conflict may be internal (within a character) or external (the character faces an outside force).
- As the story unfolds, writers introduce more details to develop the problem and keep the reader engaged with the characters.
- Narrative writers often introduce elements of suspense to keep a reader guessing about what will happen next. In many suspense stories, writers



add a detail that creates an additional problem, or conflict, for a character already facing one problem. This is called heightened conflict, and it works to intensify and increase the tension in the story.

• The sequence of events in a story builds to climax, the point at which the characters are forced to take action or make a decision.



Cujo is a fictional narrative, so the author is able to invent the situation in which the characters will face a conflict or problem. In this excerpt from the novel, author Stephen King has placed a mother and son in a closed garage with a rabid dog that is ready to attack. The story begins:

She reached the front of the hood and started to cross in front of the Pinto, and that was when she heard a new sound. A low, thick growling.

She stopped, her head coming up at once, trying to pinpoint the source of that sound. For a moment she couldn't and she was suddenly terrified, not by the sound itself, but by its seeming directionlessness. It was nowhere. It was everywhere. And then some internal radar-survival equipment, perhaps-turned on all the way, and she understood that the growling was coming from inside the garage.

"Mommy?" Tad poked his head out his open window as far as the seatbelt harness would allow.

"I can't get this damn old—"

"Shhh!"

(growling)

Here, the author has introduced two characters, a woman and her son, Tad. He has also introduced the problem: a growling noise alerts the woman that she and her son are in danger. The reader can also determine that the narrator of this story holds a third-person point of view. The narrator describes the woman's thoughts and actions not as a participant in the story, but as an outside observer. The narrator also reveals details about the scene that heighten the problem: When Tad pokes his head out of the car, the reader learns that the child is inside of the car, while his mother is outside. King writes that the mother "reached the front of the hood, and started to cross in front of the Pinto," which is the name of a car made by the Ford Motor Company in the 1970s. The story then continues:

She took a tentative step backward, her right hand resting lightly on the Pinto's low hood, her nerves on tripwires as thin as filaments, not

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Companion

panicked but in a state of heightened alertness, thinking: *It didn't growl* before.

Cujo came out of Joe Camber's garage. Donna stared at him, feeling her breath come to a painless and yet complete stop in her throat. It was the same dog. It was Cujo. But—

But oh my

(oh my God)

The dog's eyes settled on hers. They were red and rheumy. They were leaking some viscous substance. The dog seemed to be weeping gummy tears. His tawny coat was caked and matted with mud and—

Blood. is that

(it is it's blood . . .)

Now the author has given the woman a name, Donna. He has also introduced another character—Cujo, the source of the conflict.

The author includes Donna's thoughts, in italics, to disclose what she is thinking as she stares at Cujo. She is shocked, and her terror grows as she begins to understand the severity of her problem. The thought "It didn't growl before" lets the reader know that Donna has encountered Cujo in the past, and the dog did not present a problem at that time. However, the dog has changed, and Donna and her son are now in danger.

Readers can also infer that Cujo's owner, Joe Camber, is dead, although the narrator does not directly state this as a fact. Cujo "came out of Joe Camber's garage," and Donna soon realizes that Cujo's coat is "caked and matted with mud and—*blood*." The reader can now assume that the dog is a killer, and he is growling at Donna as she stands outside of her car. As you read on, you will see that certain events cause the conflict between Donna and Cujo to heighten, or intensify, at different points in the story.



Name your three favorite suspenseful stories. For each story, identify what conflict or problem the character or characters face and what narrative point of view the story uses to introduce, develop, and heighten this conflict. Describe any trends or patterns you notice in what kinds of conflicts and which type of narrator you find most interesting or engaging as a reader. Doing so may help you identify the kind of suspenseful story you want to tell. Exchange your work with a partner to give and receive feedback about your ideas.







PREWRITE

CA-CCSS: CA.RL.81, CA.RL.83, CA.RL.86, CA.W.83a, CA.W.84, CA.W.85, CA.W.86, CA.W.810, CA.SL.81a

WRITING PROMPT

You have been reading and learning about stories of suspense, in addition to studying techniques authors use to generate a feeling of suspense in readers. Now you will use those techniques to write your own suspenseful narrative based on real or imagined experiences and events.

Your essay should include:

- a plot with a beginning, middle, and end
- a clear setting
- characters and dialogue
- a suspenseful theme

In addition to studying techniques authors use to entertain readers, you have been reading and learning about stories that contain elements of suspense. In the extended writing project, you will use those narrative writing techniques to compose your own suspenseful narrative.

Writers often take notes about story ideas before they sit down to write. Often, writers like to work in a specific genre, such as science fiction. Some writers list ideas about characters, plot, and setting, and then choose the ones that will be most entertaining for readers. Others start with a conclusion and then map out situations that will lead the characters to the predetermined end of the story.

- Think about what you've learned so far about organizing narrative writing to help you begin prewriting.
 - In what sort of genre would you like to write? Genres include science fiction, horror, romance, fantasy, adventure and detective fiction, to name some examples. Most any genre can include suspense.

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Reading & Writing

Companion

- > What types of characters would you like to write about in your suspenseful narrative?
- > What kinds of problems might these characters face? How might the setting of your story affect the characters and problem?
- > What events will lead to the resolution of the conflict while keeping a reader in suspense?
- > From which point of view should your story be told, and why?
- Make a list of answers to these questions by completing the "Prewrite: Narrative Writing" graphic organizer. Record your brainstorming ideas about character, conflict, setting, and narrator on the chart. Then examine your ideas and choose the details that you think will work best for your suspenseful narrative. Here is the chart below, completed by the writer of the student model narrative. Make a fresh chart to help guide your prewriting:





PREWRITE – NARRATIVE WRITING						
Characters What types of characters would I like to write about?	Conflict What types of problems might these characters face?	Setting How might the setting affect the characters and the problem?	Narrator From which point of view should this story be told? Why?			
A family— mother, father, daughter, and son Teenage friends An elderly man A mysterious stranger (good for element of suspense— potential for conflict)	Parents struggling to provide for a family Children getting along with one- another Outside forces threatening the characters' well-being ("man versus environment"— good for suspense because the outcome is unpredictable; room to create engaging character experiences) Friends who- aren't seeing- eye to eye A man who- discovers- something he- thought was- true is not true- after all	A futuristic setting could create an interesting "man versus environment" conflict—maybe the family can't go outside because the environment is too unstable (the sun is getting hotter? no more oxygen to breathe?) (good for suspense— readers will wonder what will happen to my characters in this setting; good basis for creating interesting imagined experiences) A modern setting could bring modern- issues/a current conflict into play	Third-person narrator, so that 1) I can reveal character thoughts if I think it will add to the suspense of the story; and 2) I can more easily discuss the setting details to help describe a science fiction plot.			

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SKILL: INTRODUCTIONS

DEFINE

The **introduction** is the opening of the story, which sets the stage for the events that follow. Because the introduction of a narrative is the reader's first experience with a particular story, writers often include elements of **exposition**—essential information such as character, setting, and problem—in the opening paragraphs of the story. A story's introduction should capture a reader's attention and tempt the reader to move forward into the story with interest. After reading a story's introduction, a reader should think, "I wonder what will happen in this story. I'd like to keep reading and discover more about these characters." A good introduction hooks a reader with precise language and sensory details that transport a reader into the world of the story.



IDENTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

- The beginning, or introduction of a narrative includes **exposition.** The exposition introduces and establishes the setting, the narrator, and the characters. It frequently provides clues about the genre. For example, a science fiction story could include details that let readers know that the narrative is set in the future.
- As in other forms of writing, authors of narrative fiction often use a "hook" to grab a reader's interest. In a narrative, a hook can be an exciting moment, a detailed description, or a surprising or thoughtful comment made by the narrator or the main character.
- The beginning of a narrative also establishes the story structure an author intends to use. For example, some suspense stories begin with a flashback. This strategy "grabs" the reader's attention and builds suspense by making the reader wonder what's going on. Most stories, however, start at the beginning, introduce a conflict, and relate the events in time order. They use descriptive supporting details, engaging characters, and unexpected plot twists to keep readers interested.





MODEL

In the opening paragraphs of a narrative, a writer aims to engage and orient, or familiarize, readers with specific details. These details often reveal important information about the characters and setting of the story, and a hint of what the conflict or problem might be. The author of "The Monkey's Paw," W.W. Jacobs, introduces the story as follows:

Without, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

Here the author introduces the setting—a "small parlour of Laburnam Villa" and gives the reader sensory details to help place the reader in the opening scene. The reader knows that it is a "cold and wet" night outside, but in contrast, the family has created a cozy atmosphere inside with "drawn" blinds and a "bright" fire. These sensory details help the reader see the scene in his or her mind and draw the reader into the story.

The author also introduces the characters—"father and son," and "the whitehaired old lady"—though he does not name them. Jacobs also gives the reader clues about the personalities of these characters. The father "possessed ideas about the game [of chess] involving radical changes" and put "his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils" that it prompts the old woman to comment. These details reveal to readers that the father is a bit reckless and headstrong, while the old woman is more cautious. These hints are meant to tempt the reader to wonder, "Who are these characters?" and "How will these character traits play into the plot of the story?" A reader might also think, "This setting is peaceful. When will the conflict arise?" The author hopes the reader will want to read on to find out the answers to these questions.



Write an introduction for your suspenseful narrative that reveals information about the story's setting and characters. When you are finished, trade with a partner and offer each other feedback. How precise is the language used in your partner's introduction? Do the details help you to picture the setting and characters? What information about the characters is revealed in the introduction? Were you interested in what would happen next? Offer each other suggestions, and remember that they are most helpful when they are constructive.



Reading & Writing Companion



SKILL: NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND SEQUENCING



When writing a story, authors use a variety of narrative techniques to develop both the plot and the characters, explore the setting, and engage the reader. These techniques include dialogue, a sequencing of events, pacing, and description. **Dialogue**, what the characters say to one another, is often used to develop characters and move the events of the plot forward. Every narrative contains a **sequence of events**, which is carefully planned and controlled by the author as the story unfolds. Writers often manipulate the **pacing** of a narrative, or the speed with which events occur, to slow down or speed up the action at certain points in a story. This can create tension and suspense. Writers use **description** to build story details and reveal information about the characters, setting, and plot.

The beginning of a story is called the **introduction** or **exposition**. This is the part of the story in which the writer provides the reader with essential information, introducing the characters, the time and place in which the action occurs, and the problem or conflict the characters must face and attempt to solve.

As the story continues, the writer includes details and events to develop the conflict and move the story forward. These events—known as the **rising action** of the story—build until the story reaches its **climax.** This is a turning point in the story, where the most exciting and intense action usually occurs. It is also the point at which the characters begin to find a solution to the problem or conflict in the plot.

The writer then focuses on details and events that make up the **falling action** of the story. This is everything that happens after the climax, leading to a **resolution.** These elements make up a story's **conclusion,** which often contains a message or final thought for the reader.



IDENTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

- A narrative outline can help writers organize a sequence of events before they begin writing a story.
- A narrative outline should follow this framework:
 - > exposition, rising action (conflict), climax, falling action, resolution
- The exposition contains essential information for the reader, such as characters, setting, and the problem or conflict the characters will face.
 - > Settings are shown in descriptions and can influence events.
 - > Writers often include details to reveal the elements of the exposition without directly stating these elements for the reader.
 - > Readers should feel interested during the exposition and wonder "What will happen in this story?"
- In the rising action, a writer begins to develop plot and character.
 - > Characters are developed through dialogue, action, and description.
 - > The rising action introduces and builds on the conflict until the story reaches the climax.
 - > During the rising action, readers should feel invested in the story and care about what is going to happen next.
- The climax is the turning point in the story, often where the most exciting action takes place.
 - > Pacing is a technique writers use to control the speed of the way events are revealed.
 - > The events that take place during the climax often force characters into action.
 - > Readers should feel tense or excited during the climax and wonder, "How will the characters move forward?"
- The details and events that follow the climax make up the falling action of the story.
 - > The events that take place during the climax should lead to the resolution.
 - > During the falling action, readers should feel anxious to know how the story will end and wonder, "How will the conflict be resolved?"
- The story must end in resolution of the conflict.
 - > The way the problem and developed and moves toward resolution should be logical and feel natural to the story.
 - > The resolution should explain—with no room for doubt—how the characters resolved the conflict.



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> By the end of the story, readers should feel satisfied and entertained and think, "That was a great story!"



MODEL

In the story "The Monkey's Paw," author W.W. Jacobs uses narrative techniques and sequencing to develop both the characters in the story and the events of the plot. Look at this excerpt, which occurs just after Sergeant-Major Morris has left the White family home:

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, colouring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

In this exchange of dialogue, the author provides many key details that reveal character traits. When Mrs. White asks her husband if he has paid for the monkey's paw, she is "regarding him closely." This signals her worry that her husband has foolishly spent the family's money, and that perhaps he has done so before. It also lets readers know that the family is not wealthy, and that money is a concern in the White household. Mr. White tells his wife that he has paid a small amount, "colouring slightly." Mr. White's flushed face indicates that his wife's concern is justified, and that he has probably paid too much for the paw after all.

Herbert's "pretended horror" as he mocks the power of the monkey's paw shows that he is good-humored—and perhaps foolish. As Herbert teases his parents, the scene becomes light and playful. Then Mr. White takes the paw from his pocket and eyes it "dubiously," revealing his uncertainty about its powers. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," Mr. White says, and the author notes that he says this slowly, as he considers whether he should bother wishing at all. White's statement "It seems to me I've got all I want" not



_____ NOTES _____

only reveals the fact that, basically, he is satisfied with his life, but it also sets up the events to come in the story. Will he or won't he make a wish? The author draws out the suspense.

As the rising action of the story continues, Mr. White makes his first wish:

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved," he cried, with a glance of **disgust** at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished **it twisted in my hands like a snake.**"

Here the pacing of the story quickens as the author changes the tone of the scene and presents readers with sensory details and character action. "A fine crash from the piano" and the old man's "shuddering cry" are jarring to both characters and readers, who are eager to see what will happen after Mr. White makes his wish. Herbert and his mother spring into action and rush toward Mr. White, who—once "dubious"—now looks at the paw with "disgust." His revelation that the paw "twisted" in his hands "like a snake" suggests to the characters—and to readers—that the paw might have powers after all. The author then slows the pacing of the story again as the scene continues:

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him **anxiously.**

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

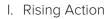
They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, **the wind was higher than ever**, and the old man **started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs**. A silence unusual **and depressing** settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

Though the pacing of the action has slowed, the author includes details that reveal the characters' oppression as they attempt to convince themselves that the paw holds no formidable power. The characters act "anxiously" and "nervously" as they settle into an "unusual and depressing" silence. The wind, "higher than ever," and the sound of a banging door upstairs are sensory details, often associated with spooky houses, which set both readers and the characters in the story on edge as the scene comes to a close. By using

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these narrative techniques, the author has crafted a suspenseful scene that points the story toward its climax. A outline of the story's rising action might look as follows:



- A. Mrs. White asks what her husband spent on paw, suggesting her fear that he has spent too much.
- B. Mr. White blushes, which suggests that he did and feels somewhat sheepish about it.
- C. Herbert teases his parents to show that that he does not take the paw seriously.
- D. Mr. White muses aloud that he is basically content and does not have anything to wish for.
- E. At last, Mr. White wishes for 200 pounds.
- F. Mr. White cries out that the paw moved, which startles and alarms his family.
- G. The pleasant mood of the evening is destroyed; Mr. and Mrs. White feel anxious.



Create an outline of the sequence of events that might make up the rising action in your suspenseful narrative. As you create your outline, consider the characters, conflict, setting, and narrative point of view you identified in the Prewrite stage and the exposition you began to develop in your introduction. What events will follow this introduction and form your story's rising action? How might you use pacing to propel the action and advance the plot in this part of the narrative? When you are finished, exchange outlines with a partner to offer and receive feedback.

