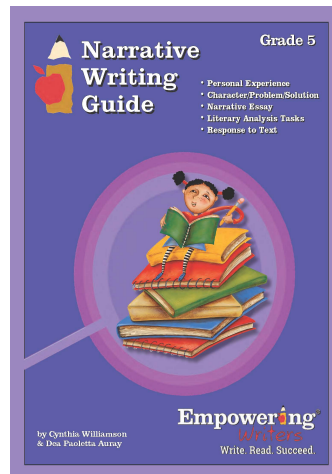




Grade 5 Narrative Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 4: Suspense



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FIND THE SUSPENSE!

Authors can build suspense by raising story questions to make you wonder or worry. They can use word referents in order to hint at rather than name a revelation. Read each suspenseful segment. Underline the story questions in red. Underline the use of word referents in blue.

1. The mighty beast blocked her path. Margo screamed. The wild creature roared and reared up on its hind legs. Terrified, Margo dropped to the ground and lay still. She felt the angry animal sniff her jacket and her hair.

2. Why did I have to go? I would have been happy to spend the whole summer at home. I could spend every afternoon floating in the warm, clear pool in my backyard. On rainy days, I could read the adventure stories I loved. I promised Mom I'd help out around the house. I'd pull every weed in the garden the instant it sprouted. I'd take out the trash. I'd do whatever she asked if only she'd let me stay home. But, however hard I tried, I couldn't change Mom's mind. She insisted that this experience would do me a "world of good." But why? Did she know something that I didn't?

3. Jamie had just turned out his light when he heard loud hoot from outside his bedroom window. He lifted the shade and found himself staring straight into the alert, unblinking eyes of a large feathered flyer. It hooted again, louder this time. Jamie banged on the window and yelled, "Go away." The bold bird didn't move.

4. It was after midnight when Holly's phone rang. The sound jolted her awake instantly. Who would be calling her at this hour — and why? She didn't recognize the frantic voice at the other end of the phone. "Holly, please. You've got to help me." Was this some kind of a joke? Or was somebody really in trouble? "Who is this?" Holly shouted into the phone.

Name _____

WORD REFERENTS (1)

Imagine that the author wants to build suspense before revealing a story critical element. One way to do this is by using word referents instead of immediately naming the character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical character or object.

Ex. Story critical character: Tiger

Adjective

- wild
- jungle
- striped
- armored
- majestic

Noun

- feline
- hunter
- carnivore
- creature
- kitty

Now, it's your turn:

Story critical character: **Soldier**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical object: **Pick-up truck**

Adjective

Noun

Name _____

WORD REFERENTS (2)

Imagine that the author wants to build suspense before revealing a story critical character, or object. One way to do this is by using word referents instead of immediately naming the character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting or object.

Story critical character: **An Astronaut**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical setting: **A tropical island**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical object: **A helicopter**

Adjective

Noun

Name _____


RED FLAG WORDS AND PHRASES


Authors use red flag words and phrases to build suspense. They use them to grab the reader's attention and tell the reader "Look out!" Something important is about to happen! Look at the list of red flag words and phrases below. Read the suspenseful segment. Place a red flag word or phrase in each blank.

RED FLAG WORDS AND PHRASES

Suddenly	Just then	All of a sudden
A moment later	In the blink of an eye	Without warning
The next thing he knew	Instantly	To his surprise
	(Add your own)	

There'd been a thunderstorm earlier in the day, but it hadn't lasted long and Kyle was hoping the sun would come out soon.

 _____, hailstones as big as softballs began falling from the sky. A cold blast of wind knocked Kyle off balance. He got up quickly and scanned the horizon. While the sky had been clear and blue a moment ago, it was now dark and filled with what looked like a spiraling column of black clouds.

 _____, Kyle was lifted toward the sky. He clapped his hands to his ears to block out the deafening roar and flew through the air, watching in shock as the houses, barns and fences below were destroyed. Panicked, he flailed his arms and kicked his legs as if he were trying to swim through the wind. It was no use. He was utterly helpless.

 _____, everything went still and silent. It was over. Unharmred, Kyle fell into a soft field of grass and caught his breath, feeling very lucky. He'd experienced a tornado and lived to tell the tale.

BONUS: Circle the words or phrases that show Kyle's feelings as he encounters a tornado.

Name _____

THE MAGIC OF THREE

One way that authors build suspense is by using “the Magic of Three.” Read the suspenseful segment below:

- Underline *red flag words* or phrases in RED.
- Number and underline each *hint* in regular PENCIL.
- Underline the *main character’s* reactions to each hint in BLUE.
- Circle the *revelation*.

Oh, why had I let Molly talk me into this. That’s what I was asking myself as squeezed my long legs into the little wooden cart. I buckled my seat belt with trembling fingers. A motor revved loudly and the tiny car lurched forward. Molly let out a shriek of joy. I screamed even louder but for the opposite reason. Why weren’t we wearing helmets? Why didn’t our cart have a roof? We were going faster by the second and I didn’t feel safe. Not at all.

In the wink of an eye, we’d reached a frightful speed. Clanking, banging sounds filled the air as we rushed up a steep stretch of track. Wind slapped my cheeks and whipped through my hair. My stomach felt funny as we careened high into the air, quickly approaching the very top of the track. I closed my eyes and swallowed hard. Beside me, Molly shouted “Faster! Faster!”

The next thing I knew, we were flying down the other side of the track, bouncing along “faster and faster,” just as Molly had hoped. I crossed my fingers, thinking “please, let this be over soon.” We reached the bottom of the track and there was one more surprise in store for us: a twisty turn that set my heart to pounding.

A moment later, I breathed a sigh of relief as I climbed out of the little cart. I’d survived my first — and last — roller coaster ride.

Name _____

BUILDING SUSPENSE (1)

- REMEMBER:**
- One of the best ways to hold the reader’s interest is to add 3 or 4 suspenseful sentences building up to the main event.
 - Raise story questions, use word referents, or the “Magic of Three.”

Read the revelation at the bottom of the page. Then, on the lines above the revelation, put the main character (first person, “I”) in the setting (the cave) and write at least 3 or 4 suspense building sentences that **lead up to** the revelation! Have fun with this! ENTERTAIN! Stretch it out! Make the reader DYING to know what’s next!

I gasped! There in the corner of the cave stood a bobcat.

Name _____

BUILDING SUSPENSE (2)

- REMEMBER:**
- One of the best ways to hold the reader’s interest is to add 3 or 4 suspenseful sentences building up to the main event.
 - Raise story questions, use word referents, or the “Magic of Three.”

Read the revelation at the bottom of the page. Then, on the lines above the revelation, put the main character (Kate) in the setting (coral reef) and write at least 3 or 4 suspense building sentences that **lead up to** the revelation! Have fun with this! ENTERTAIN! Stretch it out! Make the reader DYING to know what’s next!

Kate was amazed at the colorful beauty of the coral reef!

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (1) - SUSPENSE

Read this sentence. It gives away an exciting part of the story way too soon!

There is no **suspense** to catch the reader's attention! It is BORING!

I would dig in the cold, wet sand until I found the treasure.

Revise this by writing **suspenseful** sentences!

Do not give it away too soon! Make the reader dying to find out. Tease the reader! You may use story questions, word referents, or the magic of three.

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (2) - SUSPENSE

Read this sentence. It gives away an exciting part of the story way too soon!

There is no **suspense** to catch the reader's attention! It is BORING!

We won the championship.

Revise this by writing **suspenseful** sentences!

Do not give it away too soon! Make the reader dying to find out. Tease the reader! You may use story questions, word referents, or the magic of three.

Name _____

The Never-Ending School Day

“No! Not a chance! Absolutely not! No way, no how.” That’s what I said when my mom told me she’d enrolled me in an after-school program called Extras. The program took place in the library of my school and I’d always felt sorry for the kids who had to go to Extras. One peek into the library at 3:30 p.m. revealed a crowd of miserable kids hunched over computers or doing homework while luckier boys and girls played outside or just went home to enjoy some chill time.

What Mom didn’t understand was that I craved some time to be by myself and do nothing for a couple of hours after school. My favorite part of the day was going home to relax in the small, but cozy yellow cottage where I lived with my mom and a sweet old mutt named Max. The school day was long enough. To the kids who had to go to Extras, it must have felt never-ending. I flat out refused to join them.

“Kevin, I know it’s not what you want,” Mom said, with a heavy sigh. “It’s my responsibility to keep you safe and I think Extras is our best option.” She was starting a new job next week and wouldn’t be home until after 5. Of course, I was completely capable of being home alone for a few hours, but Mom wouldn’t hear of it. She and I had been arguing about this very issue for the past two weeks and she wasn’t giving an inch.

Neither was I. I just wouldn’t go. I’d get on the bus after school like I always did and head home. That was my plan until I found out that my bus driver knew I’d been enrolled in Extras and she’d been told to call the principal if I tried to sneak my way onto the bus after school. Evidently, Mom had made a phone call.

So it was onto Plan B. I would walk home. Unfortunately, I knew that this would be a foolish choice that would get me into real trouble. From my house, school was a 5-mile hike along a busy highway, where I’d been forbidden to walk or ride my bike.

I would have loved to go to Dan’s house. Dan lived right across the street from the school. I’d been hoping to get to know him better for a long time, but we weren’t really friends. It would definitely be weird if I just invited myself over to his house, so another idea bit the dust.

For a brief, desperate moment, I considered taking the city bus to the mall and hanging out there after school. It wouldn’t be as relaxing as going home, but at least

(continued)

I could be by myself. But what would Mom do when she came to the school to pick me up at Extras and I wasn't there? This option could land me in just as much hot water as Plan B.

Monday morning arrived, Mom's first day at her new job. She gulped her coffee and seemed nervous about the day ahead. I felt a twinge of tenderness for her. She worked so hard and I really didn't want to disappoint her.

"Have a great day," she called after me as I ran out to catch the bus. "Extras is not going to be so bad, you'll see."

The school day dragged on and when the bell rang, I trudged down to the library utterly defeated. Clearly, it was the responsible thing to do — not to mention, my only choice. As it turned out, Extras wasn't that bad. I got the homework help I needed and spent an awesome hour shooting baskets in the gym with Dan. I was surprised to see him at Extras, but he told me he'd been coming for the past few weeks and that it was better than going home to an empty house. Well, we might have disagreed on that point, but still Dan seemed like a guy I'd like to be friends with. Maybe Extras would give us the chance to get to know each other better.

When I got home, Mom promised me that if I steered clear of trouble, she'd consider letting me stay at home alone after school next year. So I am going to concentrate on earning that privilege and stop complaining about going to Extras. I've learned that after-school programs don't create a never-ending school day, just a longer one and adjusting to that is a responsibility I am perfectly capable of shouldering.



Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: THEME

You've read the story The Never-Ending School Day. Write an essay that explains how the main character grew and changed over the course of the story and provide evidence from the text to support your ideas. Identify the theme of the story and provide evidence from the text as proof of your ideas.

THINK ABOUT IT: Is this a narrative or informational assignment?

Your teacher will walk you through the following **STEPS**:

1. Read, annotate, analyze, and summarize the story.
2. Fill in the following:
 - Who is the main **point of view character**? _____
 - What is the **setting**? _____

 - What is the main character's **motivation**? (What does she/he **want**?) _____

 - What is the **conflict**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) _____
 - Fill in the summarizing framework that outlines the **plot**.

This story is about _____ .
The problem / adventure / experience _____ .
The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when _____ .

- What is the **theme**? _____
3. Consider the task:

How did Kevin feel about the after-school program at the beginning of the story?

What did he ultimately decide to do?

What was the theme?
 4. Your teacher will **MODEL** this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The theme becomes clear when _____.
- Kevin's decision to_____.
- At the beginning of the story _____.
- Clearly, Kevin feels_____.
- Kevin's mother feels_____.
- We know this because_____.
- The author show us _____.
- This makes the reader realize_____.
- Kevin's friends tell him _____.
- At the end, Kevin_____.

Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: SUSPENSE
THE NEVER-ENDING SCHOOL DAY

You've read the story The Never Ending School Day. Write an essay to explain how the author builds suspense leading up to Kevin's decision to obey his mother and go to the dreaded after-school program. Explain how this enhances the story and provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

THINK ABOUT IT: Is this a narrative or informational assignment?

Your teacher will walk you through the following STEPS:

1. Read, annotate, analyze, and summarize the story.
2. Fill in the following:
 - Who is the main **point of view character**? _____
 - What is the **setting**? _____
 - What is the main character's **motivation**? (What does she/he **want**?) _____
 - What is the **conflict**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) _____
 - Fill in the summarizing framework that outlines the **plot**.

This story is about _____ .
The problem /adventure experience _____ .
The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when _____ .

- What is the **theme**? _____
3. Consider the task:
 - How does the author build suspense?
 - How does this enhance the story?
 4. Your teacher will MODEL this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The author used suspense when ____.
- The reader wonders ____.
- Suspense enhances the story ____.
- This keeps our attention because ____.
- We read ____ .
- This use of suspense ____.
- This makes the reader imagine ____.
- This is evidenced by ____.

Name _____

**NARRATIVE EXTENSION TASK: SUSPENSE
THE NEVER-ENDING SCHOOL DAY**

You've read the story The Never-Ending School Day. Now, imagine that Kevin had successfully avoided going to the after-school program. Use the "Magic of Three" to describe his experience.

THINK AND DISCUSS: How does an author create suspense? What scenario does Kevin use to get out of the after-school program? Write this as your revelation.

RED FLAG WORDS AND PHRASES

Suddenly	All of a sudden	Just then
Without warning	In the blink of an eye	
A moment later	Next thing they knew	Out of nowhere

Revelation: _____