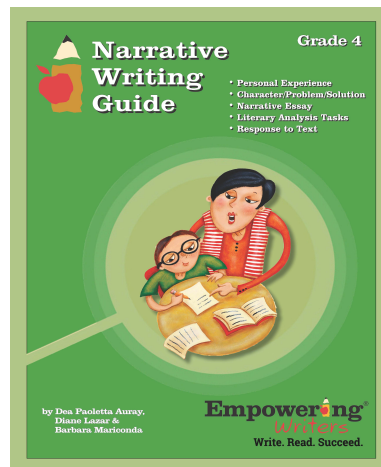




Grade 4
Narrative Writing Guide
(SKU #10200402)

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 4: Suspense



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Name _____

The Best Project Yet

Genre: Personal Experience

My grandfather looks up from his workbench and smiles at me. “Come on in, Katie,” he exclaims. He looks down at the wood in his old gnarled hands, but I can see he’s still smiling. The workbench has been all set up for me - a pile of small boards on one side, glue and paint on the other. Grandpa pats the seat beside him and I hop into the chair.

“A birdhouse,” he says. “We’ll each make one.” He hands me a piece of smooth wood, carefully cut. I take it in my hands and run my fingers over it. I can see how he’s spent a lot of time sanding it. My heart pounds a little as I imagine it hanging in the tree outside my window. This will be the best project yet, I think!

He speaks softly to me, explaining how to attach the sides, then the small pointy roof. The perch is the hardest part, and he steadies my small hands with his. He never takes the tools from my hands or tries to rush me. We work, side by side, and he lets me do the work.

I choose carefully from his whole shelf full of paints, and he puts the old tin can of bristly brushes of every shape and size on the worktable. Pale yellow for the walls, and dark green for the trim, that’s what I choose. We’re both quiet, Grandpa and me, both of us absorbed in our work, and feeling comfy and cozy together. We both stick our tongues out a little on the hard parts, and squint our eyes at the places where two colors meet - like two peas in a pod is what Grandma always says.

Finally we both sit back and admire our work. Funny thing - his birdhouse was painted gray and white - just like my house. Mine is yellow and green, just like his house. We smile at each other and he ruffles my hair with his hand. We both understand what we’ve done. We’ve each made a reminder of one another to keep in our own backyards. So at least when we’re far apart, we’re reminded of where the other of us is!

Grandpa gets the nutty smelling linseed oil and some small rags and we clean up. We don’t rush, and we don’t hurry, because right down to the last second, every project with my Grandpa feels like the best project yet!



Name _____

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 story questions in red. Underline the use of word referents in blue.

1. Robert climbed the steps to the old deserted house. Everyone said it was haunted, but could that really be true? He didn't believe that things like ghosts or spirits actually existed. Robert took a deep breath and put his hand on the doorknob. He thought about the dare, and paused. Would he have the guts to go inside and see for himself?
2. Maria knew she should have worn her hiking boots and heavy socks - that sandals were not safe in this environment. She stepped carefully over the rocks and cautiously through the tall grass. She felt a sense of danger before she actually saw it. She heard a swishing sound and saw the grass in front of her separate. The rattling sound that came next stopped her short. What was hiding in the grass, she wondered? Its beady eyes glinted in the light and its tongue flicked. But when the tip of the deadly creature's tail, raised up, angrily vibrating its poisonous warning was the most terrifying thing Maria had ever laid eyes on.
3. Ben held the small gift-wrapped box in his hand for a moment. His heart began to race. Could it possibly be what he thought? His parents beamed at him and nodded. He picked at the tape and peeled back the gold paper. The box felt so light it seemed nearly empty. Ben lifted the lid. "YES!" he said. His dad pointed out the window. While gripping the small metal object in his hand, Ben looked and broke into a smile. He couldn't believe the sight of his graduation gift parked in the driveway!



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 setting, character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of setting, character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting or object.

Ex. Story critical character (animal): Shark

Adjective

large
swimming
gray
sharp-toothed
sea
finned

Noun

fish
menace
beast
giant
predator
hunter

Now, it's your turn:

Story critical setting: **Ocean**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical object: **Boat**

Adjective

Noun



Name _____

WORD REFERENTS (2)

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 setting, character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of setting, character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Winter**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical object: **Sled**

Adjective

Noun

Story critical character: **Snowman**

Adjective

Noun



Name _____

WORD REFERENTS (3)

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 setting, character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of setting, character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Wildfire in the woods**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical character: **Firefighter**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Fire truck**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Name _____

WORD REFERENTS (4)

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 setting, character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of setting, character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Baseball Stadium**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical character: **Baseball Pitcher**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Baseball Bat**

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 to 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)	

Jeremy was upset. Night was falling fast, and he didn't have a clue where he was. The desert sun was setting and, unbelievably, it was getting cold. He shivered and dragged himself forward, in a direction he hoped would lead back to the campsite.



_____, he had the overwhelming feeling that he was being watched. Was it an animal? Another person? If it was a person, why wouldn't they call out to him? He looked around in all directions, his entire body a bundle of nerves. Maybe it was the heat, maybe it was his fear, but the desert seemed as dead as ever. Nothing but dry parched soil. He shook his head and trudged on.



_____, he thought he heard something behind him. He slowed down in order to listen better. Was it his imagination, or did he hear footsteps? He spun around, cold sweat running down his back. Nothing. Just the endless desert landscape, a tall saguaro here and there standing like sentinels in the dusk. He sighed, stared at his dusty shoes and walked on. The desert was enough to make anyone edgy, he thought.



_____, a long shadow fell across the sand in front of Jeremy. He froze, and looked up. A tall, ragged stranger stepped out from behind a cactus. Who was he, and what did he want?

THINK ABOUT IT: What senses did the author use to hint that Jeremy was not alone? Underline the sensory clues. How was Jeremy feeling? Circle phrases that show his feelings.



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*.

Tawanda rolled over for about the tenth time, trying to get comfortable on the hard floor of the tent. Just then, the moonlight cast a frightening tall shadow on the side of the tent. Tawanda sat up, heart pounding. But whatever had cast the shadow, was gone. Maybe it had been her imagination. Maybe one of those tall pines, bending in the wind. She laid back down, determined to get to sleep.

Not two moments later she clearly heard a shuffling sound outside the tent. “Who’s there?” she shouted. Silence. “Who’s there?” She could hear the hysteria in her voice and fought to stay calm. A raccoon, she thought, just a raccoon. She considered unzipping the door of the tent to see what was out there, but instead, took a deep breath and pulled her sleeping bag over her head.

Suddenly something crashed into the back side of the tent. Tawanda screamed and sat up on her knees. She ripped open the small window cover and peered outside. What she saw rummaging through the campsite was a huge brown bear!



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 saw a grizzly bear in the meadow.

Revise this by writing a suspenseful segment! 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!

I scored the winning goal.

Revise this by writing a **suspenseful** segment! 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 (3) - 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 caught a fish.

Revise this by writing a **suspenseful** segment! 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 (4) - 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 fell off my bike and broke my arm.

Revise this by writing a **suspenseful** segment! 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 _____

Party Time

I carefully laid out my new outfit on my bed, running my hand over the soft, light-washed denim of the matching jeans and jacket, the edges of both stylishly frayed. Gazing at it, I smiled, swept up the multi-colored tie-dyed tee shirt and held it in front of myself in the mirror. The perfect look for my 11th birthday party, I thought. “Are you ready?” Mom called from downstairs. “Your friends will be arriving any minute!” As I ran a brush through my hair the doorbell rang. I heard Mom opening the door, and the voices of my classmates as they came inside.

“Carly!” my Mom hollered. “Come down, your guests are here!”

In an instant my best friend Eve was on the landing knocking on my bedroom door. “Carly?” she called.

“Hang on!” I said, as I put on my amazingly cool outfit. I took one last look in the mirror before opening the door.

“Wow!” Eve said, eyeing my new clothes. As usual, Eve was wearing sweat pants and sneakers.

I grinned. “What do you think?” I asked, showing off the brass snaps on the jacket and the embroidered back pockets of my jeans.

“Cool!” Eve answered. “Wait til you see what Teresa’s wearing,” she smirked, rolling her eyes. Teresa was the new kid in the class. Mom insisted I invite her so she wouldn’t feel left out. Eve motioned for me to step onto the landing. “Check it out,” she said. From the top of the landing we peeked down the stairs into the living room. All the girls were already gathered around the punch bowl, talking and laughing. They had all heard about my new outfit, and they had dressed in their jeans and favorite tees as well. Teresa was on the other side of the room in the corner, shoulders hunched, talking quietly to my mom. Her arms were folded tightly around her as she glanced at the rest of the girls.

“Oh gee,” I whispered. No wonder Teresa looked like she wanted to disappear. She was wearing what we used to call a party dress. It was



made of light blue satin with a darker blue velvet top. There was a bow at the back of the waist. In her hair was a matching velvet bow. Teresa blushed, her cheeks cherry red.

Eve shook her head. “I don’t know what she was thinking,” she whispered as she turned to go downstairs. “Just get ready so the party can begin,” she said.

I went back in my room, closing the door behind me. Any minute Mom would be calling me again. I pulled on my new jeans and remembered what it was like when I was the new kid. I hadn’t known anyone and everything seemed strange to me. I never knew what to expect. More than anything I just wanted to fit in. By the time my tee shirt was halfway over my head I knew what I had to do.

A minute later I was dressed and ready. I took one last look in the mirror before I headed downstairs to my party. I marched down the stairs to the sound of a dozen girls gasping in surprise. I held my head high as I made my entrance, the skirt of last year’s holiday dress swishing against my knees. I pretended to be a fashion model or a princess. Along with the dress I wore a movie star smile and I waved like a celebrity. “Surprise!” I yelled, and everyone burst into applause as I swirled in a circle in the center of the room. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Teresa’s face open up like a blossom in the sun. Her shoulders relaxed and her arms dropped to her sides.

With that, the party began. Pizza and presents, games, and laughter. Everyone had a great time. On my way into the kitchen to help with the cake Mom wrapped an arm around me and leaned her face close to my ear. “I’ve never been more proud of you,” she whispered. “And I think you’ve made a friend for life!” I smiled, swiping a bit of frosting with my finger and popping it into my mouth.

Cameras snapped as I blew out the candles and made a wish, smiling at Teresa. Later, looking back at the photos, I laughed. I didn’t look the way I’d imagined I would, in my new jeans and jacket. But, as it turned out, there are other things more important than clothes.



Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: THEME

You've read the story Party Time. Write an essay explaining why Carly decided to wear a different outfit and how her decision affected Teresa. What do you think was the theme of this story? 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:
 - Why did Carly wear a different outfit?
 - How did Carly's decision affect Teresa?
 - What was the theme of this 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:

- Carly wore a different outfit because _____.
- Carly, the main character, decided to _____.
- At the beginning, we see _____.
- Teresa was affected by _____.
- We know this because _____.
- Clearly, Teresa felt _____.
- The author shows this when _____.
- The author describes _____.
- When we read _____.
- The theme of this story _____.
- We know this because _____.
- This is evidenced by _____.



Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: SUSPENSE

You've read the story Party Time. Write an essay to explain how the author builds suspense leading up to Carly's decision to change her outfit. 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 is the conflict?
- 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 the author use suspense?
How does suspense 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



