

LITERARY DEVICES

5 Ways that authors manipulate the reader's "ride" on the story plot

LITERARY DEVICE | AUTHOR CHOICE

INTENDED IMPACT | READER EXPERIENCE

FORESHADOW | The author hints at what is to come later in the story.

Authors act like psychics. While describing a current scene, they provide details to forecast a future event or outcome.



Foreshadowing causes the reader to question that things may not be as they seem, drawing him forward in the text to see how it will play out.

SURPRISE | The author introduces something that was unexpected.

Authors provide one detail after another, creating a conventional plot until *BAM!* Something sudden, startling, and stunning happens.



Well-executed surprises force the reader to immediately re-examine everything they understood about the story. (Twists the reader saw coming and/or those not plausible are turn-offs for a reader.)

SUSPENSE | The author builds anxiety and anticipation for an upcoming event.

Authors withhold critical information, put characters in jeopardy, and/or prey on reader fears and phobias—all in order to create suspense.

The reader is driven to read on, look ahead, and wonder and worry about the outcome.



Suspense makes the reader feel great concern for the character while he waits anxiously for what will happen next in the text.

TENSION | The author creates a strain, an uneasiness, an emotional struggle between two things.

Authors utilize the rising action to create a tug of war between:

- Two characters' opposing goals.
- A character's goals and his setbacks.
- A character's desire and a deadline.
- A character's goal and the rising stakes.
- A character's struggle between legal and moral choices.



Tension pulls on the emotions of the reader, causing him to picture himself in the situation and feel the struggle between two pressing sides.

PACING | An author manipulates time while telling a story.

- Authors fast-forward through time with a single sentence (e.g., *Day after day passed away without any mail.*)
- Authors pause/slow down time with character reflection or detailed sensory descriptions that allow the viewer to experience the moment.
- Authors rewind time by inserting flashbacks to build a character's backstory or by revisiting the same event over and over.



Pacing allows the reader to linger on the most important scenes that develop a character, the plot, and/or theme. (Poorly paced stories rush the reader through important details and/or bore him with unimportant ones.)

 ©Smekens Education
foreshadow

surprise

suspense

tension

padding