

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. Zach walked along the path through the zoo and stopped short. He stared into the habitat in front of him. The creature was absolutely beautiful! Its long neck extended to the treetops, and its small mouth pulled at the leaves. This graceful beast glanced down at Zach with large, soulful, dark eyes. Zach marveled at her four long, stilt-like legs. This amazing animal's coat was speckled in shades of gold and brown, like sunlight through the trees. Zach looked at the nameplate posted on the fence - "Giraffe," he whispered.
2. Lee was exhausted. The race was nearly over and every muscle in her body ached. She was in the lead, but not by much. She ignored her blistering feet and pressed on. She heard the pounding of feet gaining on her. She saw the finish line up ahead. The crowds along the curb roared. Would she make it? Would she have what it takes to win?

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. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting or object.

Ex. Story critical character (animal): **Knight**

Adjective

powerful
metal-clad
sword fighting
sharp-toothed
armored

Noun

warrior
fighter
soldier
man

Now, it's your turn:

Story critical setting: **Fairy**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Ice cream cone**

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. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Fall**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Pile of leaves**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical character: **Scarecrow**

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. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Carnival**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical character: **Juggler**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Ferris wheel**

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. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting, object, or character.

Story critical setting: **Beach**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical character: **Surfer**

Adjective

Noun

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Story critical object: **Surfboard**

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)	

Jimmy made his way into the cave. It was dark and mysterious in there. He gripped his flashlight tightly.



_____, he heard a squeaking sound. Jimmy aimed the light along the rough stone floor of the cave, but didn’t notice anything unusual. He walked on, straining to hear the peculiar sound again.



_____, he felt something brush against his back. He spun around, desperately flashing the light in all directions. But, all he saw were the damp walls of the cave. He considered turning back, but inched on, determined.



_____, there was a sound like clapping, and Jimmy was pelted with what felt like hundreds of soft furry tennis balls. He somehow fought the panic and scanned the far corner of the cave with his flashlight. What he saw were hundreds, maybe thousands of bats!

THINK ABOUT IT: What senses did the author use to hint that Jimmy was not alone? Underline the sensory clues. How was Jimmy 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*.

Dedrick peered into the darkness of the yard. It was a moonless night and he thought it would be fun to explore the backyard in the dark. All of a sudden, he heard a weird humming, buzzing sound coming from the edge of the garden. He spun around in the direction of the sound, but there was not a thing out of the ordinary. Hmmm...he thought, that’s strange. He shrugged and headed towards the bushes.

Just then he saw a small flash of light over by the trees. He stepped back, his heart pounding. “What in the w-world?” he stammered. He looked this way and that, but there was no sign of the glowing thing. Dedrick felt sweat drip down his forehead. He wiped his brow and took a deep breath, trying to focus.

Without warning, something brushed against his cheek. Dedrick swatted at it, and jumped back. He gasped. His eyes nearly bugged out of his head. Hovering in front him were hundreds of fireflies.

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 (Mike) in the setting (zoo) 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!

Mike looked up and saw a giraffe.

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 (Carlos) in the setting (palace) 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!

Carlos found himself standing before the Queen of the palace!

Name _____

BUILDING SUSPENSE (4)

- 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 (Pete) in the setting (boat on the ocean) 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!

Pete reeled it in and saw a shark on the end of the line.

Name _____

BUILDING SUSPENSE - MAKE-IT-YOUR-OWN

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.”

Write your own revelation at the bottom of the page. Then, on the lines above the revelation, put the main character (first person, “I”) in the setting 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!

(Write your own revelation here)

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!

The egg hatched and out came a strange creature.

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 dove from the high dive for the first time.

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 got a new puppy for my birthday.

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!

A butterfly landed on my shoulder.

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 _____

The Legend of the Sweet-Smelling Skunk

Long ago, before the days when stories were written down in books, in a time when people and animals could talk together in words they all understood, this story was told around in untamed corners of the Earth. Around blazing bonfires and in cozy caves, the elders of the animal kingdom and those who walked on two feet told this tale to their young so that they could learn a lesson from the skunk.

Back in these ancient times, the Skunk, with its beautiful, glossy black coat decorated with a lovely white stripe, was a sweet-smelling creature! One particularly pretty Skunk spent her days among fields of wild flowers where she would roll around in the blooms and sun herself in their sweet perfume. Amidst sunny yellow and white daisies, pink cone flowers bowing their prickly heads, and tumbles of wild red roses, Skunk stood out in her glamorous black and white fur. Often, she'd pluck a blossom and place it behind her ear so that she would not only look more elegant, but would smell as sweet as a flower. Later, Skunk would stop by the lake where she would gaze at her reflection and inhale the fresh smell of her rose perfume. She couldn't help but notice that she was the fairest and the sweetest smelling animal in the woods. You can imagine how annoying she was to the other woodland creatures.

One day, Raccoon, who also had a lush coat, saw Skunk rolling in the meadow and decided to do the same. She was enjoying the feel of the soft petals against her thick fur when another Raccoon joined her. Another soon followed. In the blink of an eye, there were more than a dozen Raccoons rubbing the scent of the wild flowers into their fur. Suddenly, a rabbit hopped by and couldn't help but notice how much fun they were having. She took a long deep sniff of the irresistible scent of the pretty blossoms.

(continued)

Raccoon waved a welcoming paw toward Rabbit. “Join in the fun,” he called.

Eagerly, Rabbit did just that. The animals reveled in the soft petals and beautiful aroma for hours while Skunk lurked from behind a tree, growing angrier and angrier with each passing second. How dare Raccoon not only hone in on her wild flower perfume but invite other animals to do so, too!

“I’ll teach those flower-loving fools a lesson they’ll not soon forget,” she whispered to herself as a selfish plan took shape in her mind.

Late that night, Skunk headed to the swamp. The water was still and foul. The trail down to the muddy muck was covered by clumps of plants with large leaves. These plants came up in the early spring and had a strong, lingering odor that Skunk despised. Skunk collected a bucket of the smelly swamp water and mud. She wrinkled her nose as the sickly stench wafted all around her. Then, she picked some of the large-leaved plants and threw the leaves in the bucket as well. From the swamp, she headed straight to the wild flower meadow where the woodland creatures had been. Skunk brushed the flowers aside and layered the smelly leaves, mud and swamp water on the ground. She stomped on it and rolled over it to make sure that the mud didn’t flow this way and that. Finally, she covered up the smelly patch of land she’d created with the most fragrant flowers she could find, creating a stinky carpet topped with sweet smelling blooms.

“I’ll watch as those animals roll in this and get a stinky surprise,” she said, with a wicked laugh.

As the morning sun began its slow rise on the eastern horizon, the creatures started stirring. Rabbit smelled it first. “What in the world is that horrible smell,” she asked.

(continued)

“It smells like swamp cabbage and mud muck, said Raccoon, holding her nose.

“Phew!”

Just then, Skunk, proud of herself for her little scheme, pranced out of the clearing with her tail raised high. With horror, she suddenly realized that the mucky smell had rubbed off on her while she was setting the trap. She, herself, smelled even worse than her mucky creation!

In fact, the muck smelled so bad that the animals never went back to the field of wild flowers and, from that day forward, they avoided Skunk, who lived out her years not only smelly but lonely.

Since then, skunks have never been able to shake off the smell of deceit, jealousy and pride. To this day, skunks with tails raised, still smell like the swamp. Even the sweetest blossoms can't cover their stench.

So what can we learn from Skunk? Before you try to do something to make someone else stink, remember — when you touch something that smells, it rubs off on you too! And when you stink, nobody will want you around!



Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: SUSPENSE

The author used suspense in the story The Legend of the Sweet Smelling Skunk. Write an essay to explain what words/phrases/sentences the author used to show suspense and why suspense is important in a story. Be sure to use 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. As a class, 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:

What suspenseful words, phrases or sentences did the author use?

How does the use of suspense add to the story?

How did the suspenseful parts make you feel as a reader?

Why did the author choose these words, phrases and sentences?

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

(continued)

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The reader discovers that_____.
- The most mysterious sentence was _____
- This made me feel _____.
- The author chose this because _____.
- Suspense adds _____.
- We see that_____.
- The author reveals_____.
- In this story_____.
- The reader is teased when _____.
- In the story, evidence suggests that_____.
- It isn't long before we discover_____.
- Through the text we learn that_____.
- In paragraph _____ we see that _____.
- We know this because _____.
- We see this when_____.

Name _____

NARRATIVE EXTENSION TASK: SUSPENSE

You've read the story, The Legend of the Sweet Smelling Skunk, but oh no! Something's missing in this story. It uses the Magic of Two, but not Three. Add another paragraph to the suspenseful section of this story that leads up to the main event and uses one of the red flag words and phrases to complete the Magic of Three.

THINK ABOUT IT: Based on the story The Legend of the Sweet Smelling Skunk, what other red flag word and sensory hint can you add to make the story more suspenseful.

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

