

## WALT to build **tension** and **suspense**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjKruwAfZWk>



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Suspense is something used in stories to make them mysterious or scary.

Suspense means waiting for something to happen or being uncertain about what will happen.



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How did S.F. Said create tension and suspense in Phoenix?

Look at these sections:

Lucky shuddered, and crawled into the toilet. The metal door groaned as he pulled it shut, and locked it from inside. He heard Bixa walk away.

He was alone in the dark.

shows the character's feelings by reactions

include short, punchy sentences for drama

And now his mouth grew dry and his heart pounded in his ears, for he could hear footsteps coming closer, down through the decks, growing louder and louder.

He breathed deep. *If these pirates find me, what am I going to do? Fight them? Me?*

He heard their voices as they entered the hold. Harsh, hard voices.

Coming closer.

And closer.

The pounding of his heart would surely give him away, it was so loud in his ears.

'Hold it,' said a voice, very close indeed. 'What's in here?'

The footsteps stopped, right outside the cubicle. Lucky had never felt so trapped.

The door rattled.

'It's locked,' said the voice.

'They must be hiding something. Smash it down.'

use empty words to hide the threat (voices, something, somebody, it, a silhouette)

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The pirate reached for him with a huge hand. It closed around his neck, pinning him to the wall. And then it tightened like a band of steel, crushing air from his windpipe.

Choking. He was choking.

*Oh, why can't I fight like Bixa? he thought desperately. I wish I had power – anything to fight back with, defend myself ...*

*Can't move. Can't breathe.*

*No air.*

ellipsis...what will happen next?

short phrases/ sentences

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Let's read an example and see if you can spot all the features we have talked about.

All of a sudden, in the distance, something caught my eye. A sinister, shadowy figure stood there, seemingly staring at me.

Who... or WHAT was it? A drop of sweat trickled down my face.

Then the mysterious being began to move. Moved towards me. Slowly and inexorably.

My mouth felt dry and my throat constricted preventing me from breathing. I wanted to run away but my legs were cemented onto the ground. A cold shiver went down my spine and then...

It was getting closer.

My heart was pounding.

And closer.

My legs were shaking.

Until it was right there, in front of me. In all the years that I had been travelling in far reaches of outer space, I had never seen anything like this before...

The bewildering, grotesque creature was approximately my height, with a large and round green body covered with viscous, grey scales. Two bulbous, spherical eyes, which glowed like blinding torches, were staring at me, inquisitively. Its two extended arms were reaching the craterous ground while its hands had threatening, sharp talons that glistened dangerously in dark.

Trying hard to breathe, I looked down and noticed that it had hooved feet like a menacing devil...what was going to happen to me?



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Task: Write the next part of your story using features of tension to describe the moment you see the alien.

1. 1.) Explain you see a figure in the distance (*a dark shadow, a mysterious shape*)
2. 2.) Describe the effect of fear on their body (*shiver down my spine, heart pounding faster*)
3. 3.) Short sentences to explain the alien is getting closer.
4. 4.) Describe the creature (*using powerful adjectives and expanded noun phrases*)

**Sentence starters:**

*All of a sudden, Without warning, Trying hard to breathe, As a shiver went down my spine, Like a drum, my heart pounded...*