



Name: _____

Handout

Words of Suspense

If you're trying to build anxiety and suspense one of the best techniques a writer can use is interesting vocabulary.

Take for example:

Mr. Wiz noticed someone standing in the shadows.

And compare it to:

Suddenly, Mr. Wiz noticed a sinister figure lurking in the dark and somber shadows.

Now, it's YOUR turn. Look at the lists of words and phrases below and try to use as many of them as you can . . .

Anxious Words:

agitated	fretful
antsy	jumpy
apprehensive	nervous
bothered	on edge
concerned	overwrought
disquieted	perturbed
distressed	tense
disturbed	troubled
edgy	uneasy
fearful	unquiet
worried sick	worked up
frantic	worried

How someone feels:

Dry mouth
Blurry vision
Dizzy head
Perspiring forehead
Sweating palms
Trembling hands
Stomach churning
Stomach in knots
Heart thumping

Suspenseful Transitions:

Abruptly
Hurriedly
In a flash / In an instant
In the blink of an eye
Like a gunshot
Suddenly
Surprisingly
With a gasp
With a gulp
With a screech
With startling speed
Without warning

Sounds of Suspense:

cackle	snap
chortle	snarl
cry	snort
gasp	squeak
groan	squeal
grunt	tremble
moan	wail
shiver	whimper
shudder	whisper