

Lesson 5: Not Hunting, But Hunted

☐ Getting Started

"The more you leave out, the more you highlight what you leave in." — Henry Green, author of *Loving and Living*

Novels may take only a few days to read, but they often span years or even decades of the characters' lives. Authors choose which periods of time to summarize in a few paragraphs or pages and which moments to expand with great detail. Sometimes a character's entire childhood is summed up in a brief outline of one or two paragraphs that take the reader only 30 seconds to read. In contrast, an important moment that takes up only a few seconds in the life of the character may be drawn out with minute description that the same reader will need fifteen minutes to read. When an author chooses to portray a moment or a few moments with great detail, those moments have particular significance to the plot and message of the book.

Authors control the rate at which the plot unfolds in their stories; this movement is called **narrative pacing**. The term comes from narration — or telling of the story — and pace — the rate or speed — at which scenes seem to happen for the reader. To control the pace of how the story moves along, writers may mix dialogue and action, long and short sentences, an outline of what is happening, or a very detailed description. William Golding uses variations in pacing to keep the reader engaged, to cover varying spans of time, and to emphasize important scenes.

Ideas to Think About

- How does a society maintain order?
- Are laws necessary?
- How do fear and desire for acceptance influence human behavior?

Stuff You Need

- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- journal

Things to Know

- Writers can increase tension and suspense by controlling the order of and rate at which information and details are relayed to the reader.
- **Narrative pacing** refers to the rate at which the plot unfolds in a story.

Activities

☐ Activity 1: Life in Slow Motion

One of the reasons an author slows the pace in a story is to recreate the same type of tension for the reader that the characters in the scene experience. A common technique for slowing down the pace of a scene is to interrupt the spoken words of dialogue with details about the mindset, voice inflections, posture, facial expressions, and physical motions of a character. Here is an example of this technique from *Lord of the Flies*. What do you notice about the underlined passages?

from Chapter 3, p. 52

[Ralph] "So we need shelters as a sort of—"

[Jack] "Home."

[Ralph] "That's right."

Jack drew up his legs, clasped his knees, and frowned in an effort to attain clarity.

[Jack] "All the same—in the forest. I mean when you're hunting, not when you're getting fruit, of course, but when you're on your own—"

He paused for a moment, not sure if Ralph would take him seriously.

[Ralph] "Go on."

[Jack] "If you're hunting sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if—" He flushed suddenly. "There's nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you're not hunting, but being hunted, as if something's behind you all the time in the jungle."

They were silent again: Simon intent, Ralph incredulous and faintly indignant. He sat up, rubbing one shoulder with a dirty hand.

[Ralph] "Well, I don't know."

Jack leapt to his feet and spoke very quickly.

[Jack] "That's how you can feel in the forest. Of course, there's nothing in it. Only—only—" He took a few rapid steps toward the beach, then came back. "Only I know how they feel. See? That's all."

Here Golding enhances the reader's experience by providing minute details of the strained conversation. He uses the interruptions in the underlined sections not only to add important information and detail, but also to control the readers' experience so that they live through the conversation as the characters do. This pacing technique makes it possible for the writer to create the same tension and suspense

for the reader that the characters experience during the uneasy and important conversation.

Here is another example from the book:

Excerpt from p. 63

"Samneric. Get me a coconut. An empty one." He knelt, holding the shell of water. A rounded patch of sunlight fell on his face and a brightness appeared in the depths of the water. He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. He spilt the water and leapt to his feet, laughing excitedly. Beside the pool his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He capered toward Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness. The face of red and white and black swung through the air and jiggled toward Bill. Bill started up laughing; then suddenly he fell silent and blundered away through the bushes."

Details such as the sunlight and brightness and the look of astonishment slow down the pace. The series of verbs — looked, spilt, leapt, and laughed — break down a moment into discrete components that also slow the narrative pace.

Compare Example A with Example B. They both relate the same event — two people seeing a bear on a trail. But in the second example, the reader feels the emotions of being in the situation. You should recreate your moment in the fashion of Example B.

Examples

Example A

Joe and I saw a bear on the hiking trail. We got scared, but luckily the bear ran away.

Example B

At dusk, after an afternoon hike, Joe and I turned back down the trail through the shadows. As we wound around the last turn, a silhouette of a mound seemed to lay across the path we had come up only a few hours before. With the crunch of our boots on the leaves, the mound suddenly shifted.

"Joe," I gasped barely above a whisper. "Did you see that?" My heart pounded in my chest, and we both froze in fear.

As the silhouette unfurled into a standing position, the figure of a large bear looming over us took shape. We held our breaths and waited. "No way," Joe whispered back, "he's just so big"

Gradually the bear lowered to all fours, turned its head to look curiously at us, stared for a moment, then padded away into the darkness. Our shoulders dropped in relief and we zipped silently down the last few meters of the trail.

To learn more about narrative pacing, watch the following 5-minute video called "Slowing Down Time in Writing and Film" by Aaron Sitze. Then complete the "Life

in Slow Motion" activity page.



Slowing Down Time in Writing and Film

www.beyondthepage.com/link/4483/

☐ Activity 2: Are Laws Necessary?

Sometimes laws make a society more civilized. For example, you are not allowed to hit people or destroy other's property because they said something to you that you didn't like. Some laws make a society less civilized. For example, it was once enshrined in our laws that a person could be the property of another man and be beaten, stripped, and starved for any reason that "owner" deemed fit. These laws made us less civilized.

In Chapter 2, Jack is excited about the prospect of the group instituting rules:

Jack was on his feet. "We'll have rules!" he cried excitedly. "Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em—" "Whee-oh!" "Wacco!" "Bong!" "Doink!"

Why would Jack be excited about the idea of rules and of punishment?

Think about what you have learned about world history. Think about how societies throughout history have evolved and what they have done to establish rules. Think about America and its established rules for society. Use this understanding to complete one of the activity options. Option 1 asks you to draft four to five laws the boys should adopt and observe. Option 2 asks you to focus on how laws should be adopted, rather than simply focusing on what the laws should be. Choose the option you prefer.

Option 1: Decree or Not Decree

Draft four or five laws the boys on the island could adopt that would address Ralph's concerns regarding cleanliness and order. Record these laws in your journal. Are these laws necessary for the boys' survival? Be prepared to discuss this question.

Option 2: How a Thought Becomes a Law

How should laws be adopted? Should the chief unilaterally decree laws? Should the boys vote on the adoption of laws during assembly? Should laws be in place for a certain amount of time only, and after that require a vote to renew and reinstate? Should consequences for breaking laws be voted on? Should the laws and consequences for the littluns be different from those of the biguns?

Create a system for how the boys can decide on and adopt laws in the community and what the system of rewards and consequences might be. Describe the system in a one-page journal entry. Be prepared to discuss how the system works.

Wrapping Up

In this lesson, you learned how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events, and manipulate time create effects such as mystery, tension, or surprise. When an author chooses to portray a moment or a few moments with great detail, those moments have significance to the plot and message of the book.

Narrative pacing makes it possible for the writer to create the same tension and suspense for the reader that the characters experience during important moments.

In the next lesson, you will explore the role of symbolism in literature and will take on the perspective of one of the main characters in *Lord of the Flies*.

Homework

You will read another chapter in the novel for homework. Add to your STEAL character pages as you read.

☐ Reading and Questions

Read Chapter 6 and then answer the following questions.

1. What did Sam and Eric mistake for the beast?

2. Why do the boys' spirits and attitudes change when it gets dark?

3. During the day, the boys go to search for the beast. What happens?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Getting Started

✿ Ideas to Think About

- How does a society maintain order?
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📖 Things to Know

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- **Narrative pacing** refers to the rate at which the plot unfolds in a story.

🕒 Skills

- Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

In this lesson, students will learn how an author's choices about how to structure a text, order events, and manipulate time create effects such as mystery, tension, or surprise. When an author chooses to portray a moment or few moments with great detail, those moments are very important to the plot and message of the book. Students will learn that a common technique for slowing down the pace of a scene is to interrupt the spoken words of dialogue with details about the mindset, voice inflections, posture, facial expressions, and physical motions of a character. This pacing technique makes it possible for the writer to create the same tension and suspense for the reader that the characters experience during uneasy and important moments in a scene.

Activities

Activity 1: Life in Slow Motion

Students will recreate moments from their own lives in slow motion using narrative pacing. Students have been provided with several examples and with a link to a video that will help them further understand pacing and the activity. Answers will vary.

Encourage students to keep their writing in a creative writing portfolio. They may get an opportunity to share with friends. Perhaps students can form a writing group and continue to develop their stories on a regular basis.

Activity 2: Are Laws Necessary?

This activity has two options. Both options lead students to consider the necessity of laws. The second option may take more time and be more challenging. Direct students to complete the option most interesting to them.

Option 1: Decree or Not Decree

Option 1 simply requires the students to draft 4-5 laws that address Ralph's concerns (regarding cleanliness, signal maintenance, fire safety, and building shelters). Discuss the laws with students and ask them whether the laws are necessary.

Option 2: How a Thought Becomes a Law

Option 2 asks students to create a system for adopting laws and consequences. It also asks students to consider whether the same laws and consequences can be applied to the very young children and the older boys. Students should be prepared to discuss and defend their points of view.

Wrapping Up**Questions to Discuss**

- What do you think will happen if the boys do come up with a system to establish laws? (Answers will vary. Answers may be optimistic and predict that laws will help keep the boys safe and healthy until they are rescued. Other students may be pessimistic regarding the boys' willingness to follow rules and fairly and consistently implement consequences for breaking them. Neither perspective is wrong.)
- What do you think will happen if they do not have a system in place for rules and laws? Consider what you have learned in your study of early civilizations compared to modern societies. (Answers will vary. Answers may include death from disease and starvation or violence against one another. Though many civilizations have adopted the wrong laws and perished or perished from unrelated events [e.g., natural disaster], no civilization has survived and thrived without laws.)

Things to Review

Review the important character developments that have unfolded by the completion of Chapter 5. Ralph is beginning to see how challenging it can be to lead and establish order. Jack's priorities are almost completely different from Ralph's priorities, and Piggy fears the effects of Jack's influence. Remind students to keep these things in mind as they read Chapter 6 and answer the homework questions.

Homework

For homework students will read and answer questions about Chapter 6 and add to their STEAL character pages.

Reading and Questions

1. What did Sam and Eric mistake for the beast?

A parachutist that landed on the mountain.

2. Why do the boys' spirits and attitudes change when it gets dark?

They hear noises, the island is dark, and the darkness frightens them.

3. During the day, the boys go to search for the beast. What happens?

They get distracted by rolling rocks, and some are tired and want to go back to the shelter.